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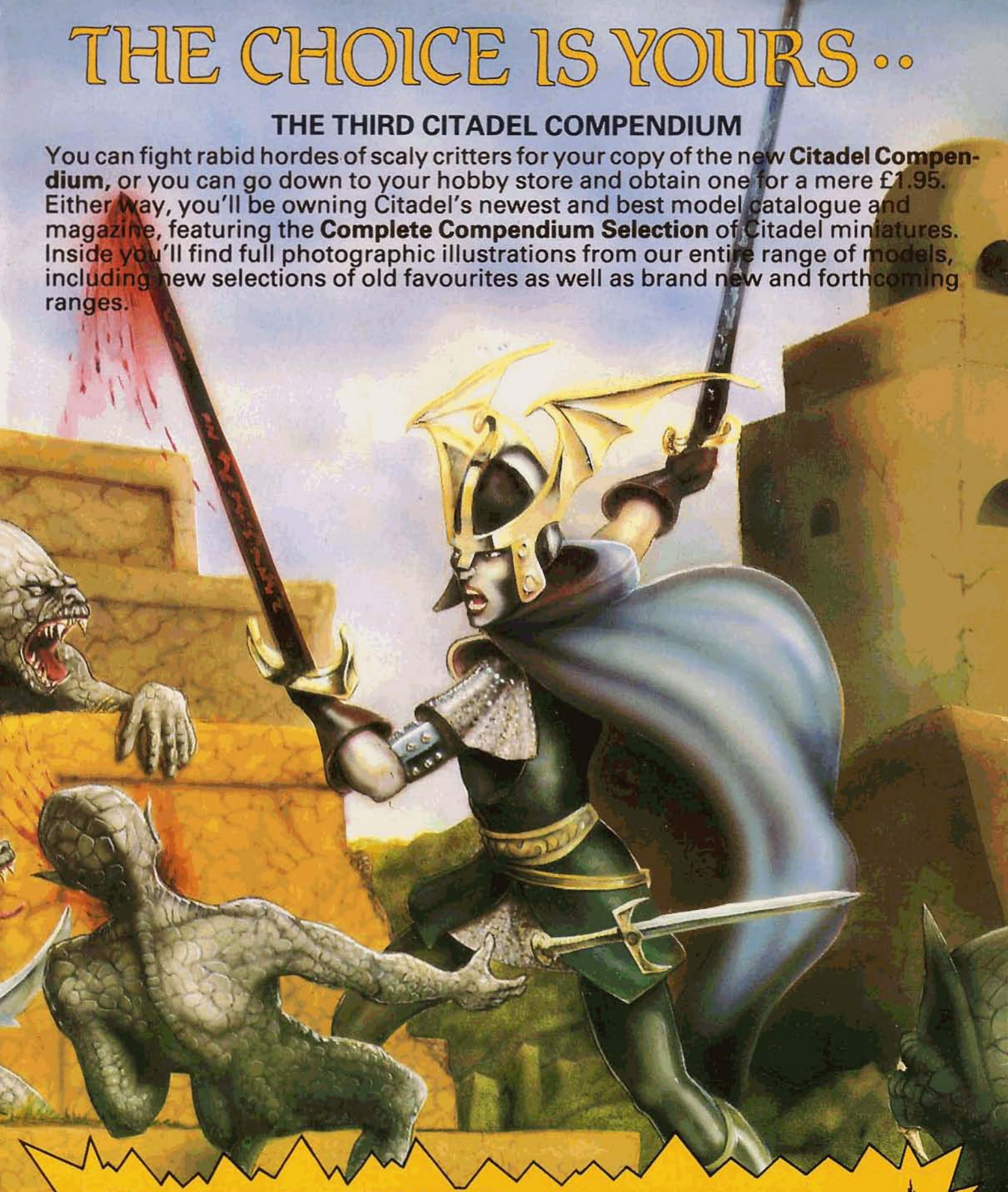

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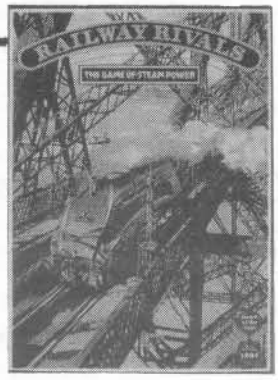

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PRODUCTION ARTIST: David Chaney
PASTE-UP ARTIST: Belinda Robinson
COVER: Alan Craddock
ILLUSTRATION: David de Leeuw, Jeff Anderson, Bill Houston, Dave Carson, John Mould, Kevin Bulmer, Gary Mayes, Pete Martin
MAPS AND PLANS: Steve Luxton, Nic Weeks
TYPESETTING: Anne Kiernan
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Dave Langford, Bob McWilliams, Dave Morris, Joe Dever
ADVERTISING: Jon Sutherland
PUBLISHER: Games Workshop Ltd
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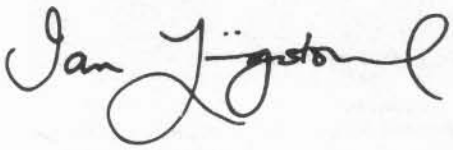
After the most successful *Games Day* to date, it is time to look to the future of conventions in this country. Paul Aagaard, the man who master-minded *Games Day*, has already laid the foundations for an explosive expansion in gaming conventions. With seven regional *Dragonmeets* building up to next year's *Games Day*, gamers up and down the country will have even greater opportunities to participate in their hobby, and meet famous personalities as well as other players.

Meanwhile, Christmas is nearly upon us, and the shops will soon be bursting with new games and supplements. Probably the most eagerly awaited of these will be the *Judge Dredd RPG*, so until next time, dwarflets, Splundig Vur Thrigg!



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Critical Mass *is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column, written by* Hugo-*winning author Dave Langford.*

BLOCKBUSTED!

The panting reviewer gritted his teeth, dodging the huge blockbusters arcing down from interliterary space. *Kaboom!* Object 'Wolfe-399' had detonated close to his forebrain – and heavier stuff was coming. Object 'Niven/Pournelle-495' struck with stunning force! Too late to crawl to safety on three still functioning brain cells – our reviewer could only gaze helplessly as Object 'Dickson' plunged towards a terminal 692-page impact, targetted right between his eyes . . .

In this spate of big fat books, the one which *feels* blockbusting is Larry Niven's and Jerry Pournelle's *Footfall* [*Gollancz* 495pp £9.95]. Their most impressive joint effort, it has the lot: politics, credible physics, well-drawn aliens, ground and space war, suspense, slam-bang action and a climax that grips like superglue. Arriving in 1995, the alien 'fithp' prove less than friendly, casually zapping the orbital welcoming party and all our satellites – whereupon it's hard to fight back. Anything launched, or moving on the ground, is a target for fithp lasers and guided meteorites. (You detect a strong plug for 'Star Wars' space weaponry? Clever you.) Despite minor triumphs, it becomes clear that Earth's only hope is the craziest, most irresponsible spacecraft ever, kicked skyward by successive nuclear explosions (the authors *love* it). The result's terrifically exciting. The secret fithp weapon is less innovative, or even secret: N&P did all that stuff in *Lucifer's Hammer.*

Their flaws are blockbuster flaws: momentum takes 100 pages to build, several of the teeming characters are dispensable, and megadeaths are glossed over. (Niven: 'Obliterated places contributed nothing to the theme of war.' Oh.) The tension's marvellous when deadpan, but sometimes N&P try too hard with lines like '*Eat hot gamma rays, foolish Centaurans!*' (which does have a certain *je ne sais quoi*), or, at the apocalyptic launch of That Ship: 'God was knocking, and he wanted in *bad.*' All the same, I read most of it twice and ran out of adrenalin.

The Final Encyclopaedia [*Sphere* 692pp £3.95] brings Gordon Dickson's 'Childe Cycle', ie the Dorsai series, to a weighty conclusion – though historical prequels are still threatened. Hero Hal Mayne is the last of the 'universe-shakers' who dominate the sequence: much of the book is a prolonged rite of passage as he survives various worlds and threats while learning how to be Superman. Finally he acts, saving the universe in somewhat undramatic fashion by, essentially, locking himself in a research library to work out the Answer (while, outside, the baddies ravage unchecked). En route there's much action and debate, some overblown philosophy, and rather too many words. Over five novels and several shorts, this series has risen from vigorous pulp adventure to self-conscious worthiness . . . and has, alas, got less *interesting*.

In an enthusiastically pretentious afterword, Dickson's leading apologist Sandra Miesel praises him by invoking Milton, the Bible, Heraclitus, Lévi-Strauss, and the *Tao Te Ching*, not to mention Buddhist, Celtic, Chinese, chivalric, Freudian, Hindu, Islamic, Norse and Persian myth. The Nobel Prize is apparently only a step away.

Speaking of myth-systems, *Salvador Dali's Tarot* [*Michael Joseph/Rainbird* 175pp £8.95] is well worth attention. Tarot expert Rachel Pollack introduces and comments on the 78 strange paintings of Dali's personal Tarot pack – each reproduced in perfect colour on its own page. I have no faith in fortune-telling, but the cabalistic symbolism is fascinating . . . especially when refracted through the eye of a supremely dotty surrealist. Other Tarots, after all, are distinctly lacking in crutches, butterflies, ghosts and melting watches. (Imagine the resulting *Cthulhu* scenario if Marcus Rowland buys this book . . .)

Gene Wolfe practises his own brand of dottiness in the fat *Free Live Free* [*Gollancz* 399pp £9.95], which is frankly unclassifiable. Four seedy but enchanting characters (witch, private eye, salesman, whore) help aged Ben Free (possessor of a Secret Talisman) to defend his slum home from demolition: after a hilarious rearguard action (eg eight Chicago cops trying to evict a naked 300-lb lady who's prudently oiled herself all over) they seek the now vanished Free, only to be dogged by behind-the-scenes forces (or are they Forces?), leading to . . . In short, as well as telling an offbeat story, Wolfe's playing games with the reader: is this stuff 'mainstream', fantasy, comedy, a detective or spy story, or what? The search ends in the enigmatic 'High Country', and in the genre you least expected; the final surprises aren't even the *kind* of surprises anticipated. I refuse to say more. It's a breath of fresh air. Read it.

Spider Robinson's *Mindkiller* [*Sphere* 246pp £2.25] provokes mixed feelings. It's a good read, an ambitious effort to extrapolate the SF gimmick of 'wireheading' (addiction to pleasure-centre stimulation) to a mind-expandingly logical conclusion – and to tell the story through the eyes of real people who suffer and bleed and throw up and have sex (especially that). Largely it succeeds: Robinson's a sympathetic writer when not making godawful puns. 'All human life is here' . . . much more than all, in fact, since the major characters seem trapped on an emotional roller-coaster, alternating between manic hilarity and showers of tears. One can't help suspecting that this over-intensity is meant to distract you from the dodgy coincidences and out-of character behaviour required to drive the plot . . . not so much Spider as Heath Robinson.

Robinson's been called the new Heinlein (and has certainly learnt tricks from him) – bringing us to the old Heinlein, whose later grot has been severely treated here. Redressing the balance, *Gollancz* have reissued two of his best: *The Door into Summer* [190pp £8.95] and *Time for the Stars* [244pp £8.95], solidly entertaining 50s novels of, respectively, time and space travel. They don't creak but still purr along.

Another oldie, Clifford Simak, is still at it with *Enchanted Pilgrimage* [*Methuen* 249pp £2.50]. Such minor Simak fantasies slip down easily thanks to the old boy's charm, with everyone speaking in the same 1930s American Farmer tones as his SF heroes, robots, etc. This charm, alas, fades visibly between the 1975 *Pilgrimage* and its 1984 companion. More fantasy: Barbara Hambly's trilogy concludes with *The Armies of Daylight* [*Unicorn* 311pp £2.50] which polishes off the unspeakable and undefeatable Dark with reasonable flair, neat character work, and lashings of edge-of-the-seat suspense. In short, it delivers the expected goods: from hints in the previous book I'd hoped for the unexpected, but there you go.

In brief: *Heroes of the Equinox* and *World without Stars* [*NEL* 46pp £2.50], are the witty and impressive comic-strip adventures of Valerian (Spatiotemporal Agent), as translated from French – good fun. *Starhunt* by David 'Tribbles' Gerrold [*Hamlyn* 'Venture 06' 252pp £1.95] began as a rejected *Star Trek* script, was novelized (with names changed) as *Yesterday's Children* in 1972, and now reappears with 60 added pages converting the ending from downbeat to upbeat. Ho-hum stuff. Michael Shea's *Nifft the Lean* [*Granada* 363pp £2.50], praised here many issues ago, is a lurid cross between Jack Vance and Heironymus Bosch which you should all buy *instantly* (happy nightmares!) Ian Watson's light-hearted but cosmic SF trilogy makes its paperback debut with the nifty *Book of the River* [*Granada* 240pp £1.95]. Mary Mackey's *The Last Warrior Queen* [*Unicorn* 240pp £2.95] may be triffic but has such an awful cover as to deter me from looking . . . Enough.

News from the World SF Convention: Britain will host the 1987 Worldcon; my hot tip *Neuromancer* (soon in *Granada* paperback) won a Hugo award; and, good grief, one of the lesser Hugos went to me . . . □

In Open Box, *science fiction and fantasy games and rulebooks currently in the shops are reviewed by independent authorities.*

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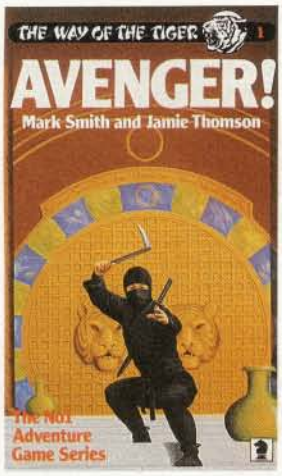
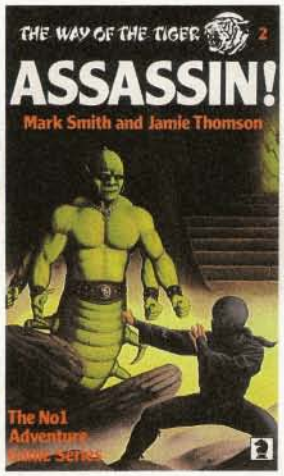
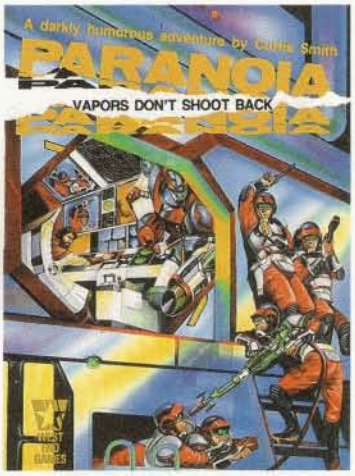
The combat system is based on kicks, punches and throws. In combat you have to throw over the opponent's Defence score against the particular form of attack, then take damage from their Endurance score until it reaches zero – when it does then they are dead.







Although simple in essence, there are some nice elaborations; a throw does no damage, but allows an extra attack, with increased chances of success, and blocking blows can negate damage to yourself, but lessens the effectiveness of the next attack. Inner Force can be used five times to double damage, and Fate rolls are used to decide whether perilous leaps and the like succeed or not. Nine ninja skills are listed, ranging from the use of shuriken to immunity to poisons, feigning death and climbing. All 'characters' have shuriken, plus three other skills. A number of ninja tools are also carried.

Avenger! works well, despite the fact that the ninja theme, although accurately detailed, is rather flimsily tacked onto the world of Orb, already used in *Talisman of Death*. It is possible to successfully complete it with only one point of Endurance left, and much depends on making sensible choices and picking up clues given earlier in the book. *Assassin!* shows signs of being written in haste, with more chance of being killed, and less of using your wits. Plot and atmosphere may be a bit 'Kung Fu meets *AD&D*', but both add a few new twists to the adventure gamebook formula, and deserve credit for that. Overall, good entertainment value.

Ease of Use:	7	**Value:**	8
Production:	6	**Skill:**	7
Overall:	8		**Chris Elliott**

VAPORS DON'T SHOOT BACK
RPG Scenario
West End Games £6.95

Friend Computer, can I tell the readers about this adventure?
WHAT IS THEIR SECURITY CLEARANCE?
I don't know. Probably infrared.
ACCESS TO THIS ADVENTURE IS LIMITED TO GRADE ORANGE.
OK. Can I give them a rough outline without revealing specific details, Friend Computer?
WHAT IS YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE, CITIZEN?
Ultraviolet, Friend Computer.
YOU MAY PROCEED, CITIZEN.

Vapors Don't Shoot Back is an Orange-clearance adventure for *Paranoia*, the RPG set in a closed city dominated by a totally insane, sorry, lovably eccentric, Computer.
PLEASE SPEAK MORE CLEARLY, CITIZEN.

Sorry. A team of two to six troubleshooters, unfortunately infiltrated by treasonous commie mutant scum and other undesirables, are tricked into undertaking an assignment which is not necessarily in the best interests of the Computer; they are to serve the High Programmer Nevo-U in his bid to defend his title in the 84th annual High Programmers Invitational Tournament. Naturally this competition is illegal, and . . .
PLEASE BE VERY CAREFUL, CITIZEN. YOU ARE RELEASING RESTRICTED DATA.

The adventure is 32 pages with a loose cover containing character data. It takes the Troubleshooters to various parts of the city, in particular CENSORED and CENSORED. Ultimately they are sent outside the city, on a quest to recover CENSORED before it can be captured by loyal servants of the Computer. As the adventure proceeds the Troubleshooters will gradually realise that there is something odd about their assignment, and may be able to use the information to CENSORED or even CENSORED. The troubleshooters . . .
HAVE BEEN TERMINATED. THIS BRIEFING WILL NOW END PLEASE REPORT TO THE EUTHANASIA CENTRE, FRIEND REVIEWER. HAVE A NICE DAY.

Seriously, though, folks, *Vapors Don't Shoot Back* is a fun adventure with no obvious flaws. As usual, lethality should top fifty per cent for each encounter. The idea of playing with less than four or five troubleshooters is fairly ludicrous; although they aren't expected to survive the various traps, incidents, and firefights in this scenario, they should stay around long enough to learn why they are being killed, and appreciate the funnier aspects of the adventure. All the High Programmers are eccentric; Nevo-U is a bit odd, but others are downright strange. There's also lots of interference from the secret socities, cults, and other groups within the city, and a chance to meet the unusual inhabitants of the world outside the dome.

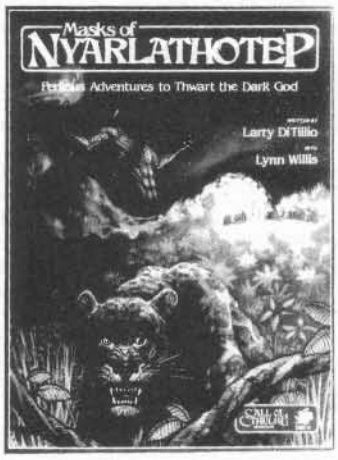
Production:	8	**Usefulness:**	7
Complexity:	6	**Skill:**	6
Overall:	7		**Marcus L Rowland**

MASKS OF NYARLATHOTEP
RPG Scenario
Chaosium £19.95

Masks of Nyarlathotep is the latest *Call of Cthulhu* supplement to come from *Chaosium*, and it is undoubtedly the finest. It is an episodic, globe-trotting campaign to save the world from Ultimate Doom at the hands (tentacles?) of the Outer Gods. *Masks* is boxed, and contains five scenarios, a book of handouts and various other odds and ends.

Taking the scenario booklets in the order in which they are presented, we begin in New York. The Big Apple is the central stage for an horrific murder of a friend of one of the investigators. The mystery surrounding his death, and a huge wealth of clues serve to introduce the investigators to the campaign proper. Hidden within the pages of the New York booklet is a write-up of a cult, new spells, monsters, items and adversaries, and most importantly the low-down on the Carlyle Expedition.

The next book covers London, with the investigators going there to follow up leads gained elsewhere. The booklet details another cult, more spells, etc, and has a bewildering array of red herrings, dead-ends and puzzling situations for the players to solve. Several interesting NPCs appear in this scenario, provid-



ing the keeper with a bit of fun as he portrays each eccentric character. The London episodes are extremely atmospheric, and should prove to be one of the high spots of the campaign.

Cairo, the intended destination of the Carlyle Expedition, is covered in the third booklet. The atmosphere of 1920s Egypt created is almost tangible. There is certainly lots for the investigators to do here, though again not all leads are bona fide. The mass of information builds up, and may engulf the players if they don't connect the various elements.

Kenya is the subject of the fourth chapter, and contains more of the same kind of plot that the previous three books have held. This adventure deals with the end of the Carlyle Expedition. Much of the scenario takes place away from civilisation, although a sizable portion also occurs around Nairobi. There are plenty of NPCs to interact with, and a familiar cult reappears.

The final booklet covers Shanghai. Here too can be found more adversaries, another cult, and mystery galore. There is also an old enemy for the players should they have completed another *CoC* campaign. On the plus side, Shanghai also contains many allies for the investigators, though these are slightly elusive.

The handouts booklet provides newspaper clippings, letters in *real* handwriting, quotations, a telegram and various other pieces that may be useful to the investigators. There is also a supplementary set of handouts on a separate piece of stiff card in the box, providing two business cards and a surprise item . . . *Masks* also contains a 4-page introduction so that the keeper can familiarise himself with the basic plot before tackling the scenarios.

Though many praises can be sung for *Masks*, I can forsee several problems.

Firstly, the plot is *very* complex, and novice keepers would be well advised to try other, smaller campaigns before attempting this tough cookie. The information is difficult to assimilate all in one go and even experienced keepers will probably have to read the work several times before they are fully happy with the story.

The campaign itself has such a deadly, difficult plot that players may find it very easy to lose investigators without uncovering much of the mystery. Whilst this is true for many *Cthulhu* scenarios, *Masks* emphasises it to a fine point. Players must learn to tread the very fine line between being too inquisitive and not inquisitive enough, and must balance knowing too little and acting too early against knowing more but possibly acting too late.

Masks Of Nyarlathotep is an adventure that is fun for both sides to play. The players have a real mystery to get their teeth into, and the keeper is provided with NPCs in great numbers, all of which are fun to play. Some are dastardly, some insane, some whimsical. All have their own desires and motivations. This is the best campaign I have ever seen, from *Chaosium* or other sources. It will take some beating.

Complexity:	9	**Ease of Use:**	7
Production:	8	**Value:**	9
Skill:	9	**Overall:**	9

Phil Frances

THRILLING LOCATIONS
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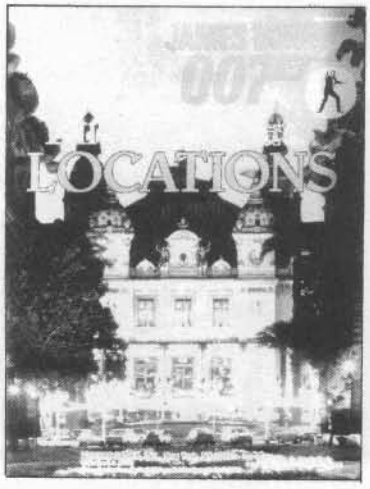
I've had mixed feelings about supplements and scenarios for the *James Bond 007* RPG – the excellence of products like the *Q Manual* being let down by mediocre packages such as *For Your Information*. *Thrilling Locations* goes a long way towards putting the balance back towards quality, joining the *Q Manual* as an indispensable aid for the *007* game master.

Information on cities apart, background for the game has been thin on the ground; most GMs having to rely on their own knowledge of exotic environments and



settings in the world. *Thrilling Locations* provides information on a number of important places and things that will fill in a number of blank areas in the game master's knowledge. It is effectively a useful insight into the semi-unreal, glossy society world of cinema Bond; places to be *seen* at and transport to be *used* (and to be seen doing so!).

Previous information on cities, etc, has always been scant: *Thrilling Locations* hints at what is possible. The principality of Monaco, besides the usual map and notes typical of city descriptions, also has some of its more notable features, namely the Casino de Monte Carlo and the Hotel de Paris, covered in some depth. Background information is supplemented by colour and black and white photographs – something that continues throughout the supplement, and very welcome it is too. The photographs round off the product nicely, providing useful visual images of the many locations.

The casino scene (a 'London casino' is covered as well as Monte Carlo) is complemented by a useful guide to the various games – roulette, chemin de fer and craps are a few that are detailed. The explanations are especially useful for non-gamblers like myself. The notes complement the more clinical handling of gambling in the *007* rules.

Famous hotels and restaurants are among the other locations included. Colour photographs and floor plans are again provided; floor plans of hotels being especially useful given the nefarious activities usually associated with them. Hotels come complete with notes on suites, facilities and entertainment, whilst the restaurants have all-important notes on the menu offered . . . Space is the enemy of this section: there is undue emphasis on American locations and, given that Bond is the epitome of the English gentleman spy, very little in the way of information on classy British establishments. Perhaps it says something for Britain's potential as a wildly exciting place.

From 'Where to Go', *Thrilling Locations* also lets you know 'How to Get There' – travel by rail, ship and plane. The railway section is primarily concerned with the Orient Express. Apart from one literary glitch in the references (Graham Greene wrote *Stamboul Train*, not *Stamboul Express*, as stated – someone was obviously on the wrong track), the section seems well researched, covering the modern Orient Express rather than the original. Floor plans and more photographs provide a useful look at opulent travel.

The section on luxury boats is a little disappointing – in a game of luxury travel, I might have expected a little on cruise liners such as the QE2, rather than what turns out to be a section on luxury yachts. Similarly, the notes on luxury air travel (on Regent Air) and the short notes about international airports are a little short on inspiration for the GM.

The amount of information provided in *Thrilling Locations* is one thing, but *Victory Games* have also seen fit to include a host of scenario and encounter ideas with each section of the book. These range from the implications of being given an object by a strange child in a hotel lobby (is it a gadget from Q or a bomb?), to finding the irrepressible Sheriff J W Pepper floating around in an inner tube far out to sea. Hard-pressed GMs will welcome these amusing sidelines and potential scenarios.

There's still plenty of information to be covered, however, and no doubt the equivalent of a *Thrilling Locations 2* (and *3*, and . . .) will appear in due course. On the whole, I have very few quibbles about this supplement and would whole-heartedly recommend it to other *Bond* GMs.

Production:	8	**Ease of Use:**	7
Usefulness:	9	**Value:**	8
Overall:	9		

Bob Neville

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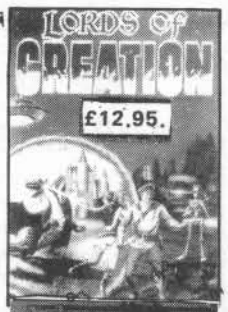

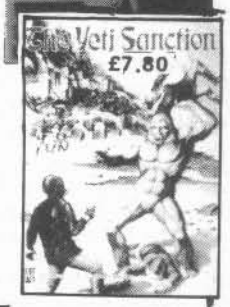

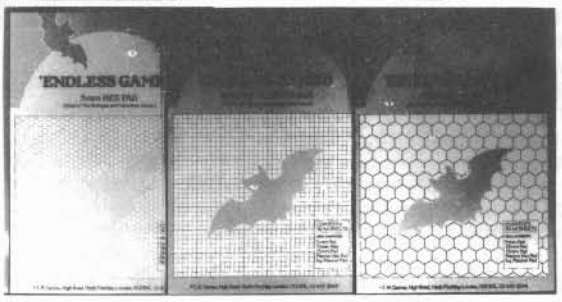

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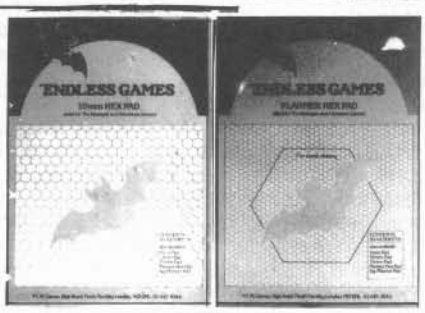

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The Face of Chaos

A Discussion of Alignment in AD&D by Peter Vialls

One of the central problems in an *AD&D* campaign is the alignment structure: what *is* 'chaotic good' behaviour? (Or lawful neutral, neutral evil *et al*?) The rulebooks are little help – the answer must come from the DM's personal preference.

The question is important; as Lew Pulsipher said in a very early *White Dwarf*, to ignore alignment is to short-change the players. Also, it ignores a source of much of the flavour of *AD&D*. Critics who claim that alignment is unnecessary are ignoring the problems inherent in an unaligned game. In *Traveller*, for example, in the space of a few minutes, a character can change in nature from pleasant to vicious with no harm apart from that to characterisation. One answer is to insist that players choose natures and aims for their characters, and penalise experience points for those that fail to adhere to their professed nature; another is to have players who role-play to the hilt, and who would not destroy their character's nature in this way. (This is obviously the best solution for any system; unfortunately, if a player refuses to co-operate, the referee may have no form of sanction without a game mechanics-based alignment.) Alignment, though, makes developing a character easier for new players, and provides a far better source of scenarios and purpose for a party than the mindless hunt for money; with an alignment structure, a DM can ensure a party will never lack motivation for taking on his current scenario (avoiding, to an extent, the nightmare of a party which decides to wander off into unknown and unplanned territory).

The main problem is deciding which actions are within a character's alignment. To take good and evil first, you could graft Christian morality into the campaign; if an act does not comply with Church values, it is evil. This produces problems with neutral behaviour, and with the issue of sensuality; which some will claim to be wrong, but which others (equally hotly) state to be neither good nor evil. Again it is a matter for a DM's preference! Perhaps a safer (less inflammatory) solution is to say that an evil act is one that specifically causes other people or creatures unnecessary harm or woe. A good act is the opposite, while a neutral act is one that neither aids nor harms others. (I am not suggesting that this is a complete solution, but at least it is a step towards it.) There are a few minor difficulties – for instance, is an act that will eventually cause great good, an evil act if it causes short-term harm? The answer is both yes and no, depending on your attitude to law and chaos.

Lawfuls are organised and careful, with some respect for authority, perhaps a more honourable outlook than chaotics, and an inclination to plan and prepare carefully. They make efficient members of a team because they are willing to co-operate with each other. Few people seem to find visualising a lawful particularly tricky. Chaotics, on the other hand, are sometimes portrayed as people who act in a random fashion, with no thought to their acts. There are a number of random actions tables available in some magazines, where a character's actions are decided by rolling dice. Clearly such an idea is daft – would *you* act only on the roll of some dice? There is no requirement that chaotics must have intelligence and wisdom below 5, so they too must be considered to act intelligently; there must be method to their 'madness'. It is far better to regard a chaotic as an individualist, who dislikes organisations and bureaucracy, and who prefers to go his own way. His actions will be chaotic in the sense that they are based on spur of the moment opinions and perceptions, rather than on carefully organised plans; he views matters in the short term, rather than taking the long-term view. A chaotic would have a solitary rather than team-orientated mentality, and would be the bane of authority. While groups of chaotics are not uncommon, they do not interact so well, tending to lack co-ordination. A chaotic may tend to be more happy-go-lucky than a lawful, trusting more to chance and good fortune, but he need not be stupid; while he may not be so cunning, he may be more skilled at coming up with a suitable reaction based on the minimum amount of information.

Nor can it be said that a chaotic good is less good than a lawful good. In the *AD&D* rulebooks there is a definite slur upon chaotics, with a suggestion that they tend more towards evil than do lawfuls. Thus a chaotic neutral's special familiar is evil while a lawful neutral's is good; the most highly good character class is the lawful good paladin, and so forth. One answer

is to make the ranger an equally good but only chaotic character class and to design separate special familiars for lawful and chaotic neutral mages, but most importantly the imbalance must be recognised and fought. After all, both chaotic good and lawful good are equally good, but in differing ways. The suggestion that a character who is chaotic good is somehow tarnished is unfair; equally, a lawful good is not automatically saintly. There are degrees within any alignment. At the other end of the scale, lawful evil is no less evil than chaotic evil; in some ways the lawful evils should be feared far more, due to their better organisation (witness the orcs in Tolkien).

The difference between law and chaos is also stressed by the term 'honour'. A paladin (the epitome of lawful good) is chivalry incarnate; thus a paladin would return a sword to a disarmed enemy to give him a fair chance, and would refuse to attack from behind or with unfair odds. But this does not make him any more good than a chaotic good ranger carrying out a guerrilla war against a powerful force of orcs; while the ranger's form of combat would not be honourable in the paladin's eyes, it is still good, and probably more effective than the paladin's answer of a frontal attack. (Sometimes it is the lawfuls, trapped in their code of honour, that are more stupid!) Equally, a lawful evil may have the same sort of code of honour as a paladin; yet this does not make him good. He, too, might return a sword to his opponent and fight honourably, but may at the same time act in a way that is utterly evil, kidnapping maidens and extorting money. (Think about the Black Knight in Arthurian legend.)

To go back to the question of short-term harm, a lawful, who will plan ahead, might condone a lesser harm for a future good, whereas a chaotic would see the present harm, and object to it. For example, a chaotic good ranger, when faced with a gang of thugs beating up a shop-keeper who had refused to pay protection money, would immediately fight the bullies, rather than letting it happen and summoning the Watch; the latter option could well have led to the identification of the person organising the racket.

With a system of alignment based on the deliberate cause of harm being evil, what is neutral behaviour? This can best be expressed as self-interest and self-preservation. A neutral is a person whose acts are specifically aimed at looking after 'number one', and who doesn't care whether his acts cause others harm. He will not go out of his way to inflict harm or misery, but will not take steps to prevent himself hurting others, either directly or indirectly. Essentially, his nature is callous indifference to the feelings of others. A lawful neutral is, by this definition, in some ways a more unpleasant person than a chaotic neutral. The former is a planner, thinking ahead about what will best benefit him, acting to make opportunities which further his aims, and therefore foreseeing the harm he may inadvertently cause, but accepting it. A chaotic neutral, however, is an opportunist, making the most of opportunities for gain and self-advancement when they occur, and perhaps not comprehending what harm he is causing. On the other hand, a lawful neutral may be more prepared to act in a way that is honourable: of course, a chivalrous nature is not an essential for any but the more extreme lawfuls.

Within any neutral, though, there are shades of grey. Some neutrals may, if they have two courses of action that are equally effective for them, always choose the one that causes least harm. Others may do the opposite! The true neutral will not worry, and will pick more or less at whim, sometimes one way, sometimes the other.

This leaves neutral good and neutral evil to be resolved. Some DMs treat these as the purest forms of good and evil, uncluttered by law and chaos. Others treat them as lesser forms, closer to the lawful or chaotic neutral positions. Equally, they can be compared to lawful or chaotic good and evil, but unconfined by their restrictions. The problem with the latter idea is that many players will then choose this alignment, since they then do not need to worry so much about their actions. One or both of the other options are better: to use both, the alignment needs to be split into neutral good and evil and true good and evil. The neutral good position, of course, is likely to bend towards a lawful or chaotic neutral position.

The same idea could, of course, be used for lawful and chaotic neutral, giving true lawful and lawful neutral, for example. This is most useful in a campaign where the struggle between law and chaos is more important than that between good and evil.

Finally, there is true neutral. This is undoubtedly a cop-out alignment, which can be used to justify any actions as 'preserving the balance'. My answer (I hope not by any means illogical or unfair!) is the same imposed by the *Players Handbook*: to restrict true neutral to druids only, as they are the only class able to visualise the world from a truly impartial viewpoint. This ensures that all characters (other than druids) will have a firm alignment.

Which conflict, therefore, is more important – that between good and evil, or that between law and chaos? Such a question must be up to the individual DMs; my personal preference, though, is for the former. The original idea of law versus chaos comes from Michael Moorcock's apocalyptic books, typified by those of the Elric 'saga' (which *every AD&D* player should read), although it seems in this case that Moorcock is using law and chaos merely as different terms for good and evil. Thus while the distinction is valid, a struggle between the two seems difficult to envisage, and always confuses new players; so I feel the more easily understood struggle between good and evil is a better choice. Of course, a third option is a total balance between the two struggles, with both being important. This could be superb if well planned, but provides a vast range of problems. Experienced DMs only need apply!

Another matter is the alignment of monsters. If you look at the *Monster Manual* you will see that dwarves are lawful good. How many chaotic dwarf thieves are there in your party? The same applies to elves, halflings, gnomes, etc. Obviously, for these races, the alignment given is merely the most likely, or the alignment of the culture of the creature, rather than the only one possible. So why shouldn't the same apply to gnolls or ogres? It seems quite possible that a moderately bright ogre (as ogres go) might decide that he preferred to be chaotic good, in which case you could meet him in the local temple. If monsters can decide their alignments, there is no longer any justification for murdering orc children, as they might grow up to be good – instead, paladins and clerics in the party must find some way to take them back to the local temple to be brought up correctly. Such a situation makes scenarios far less black and white (one of the major objections levelled at an alignment structure) with characters not being certain that the mind flayer they have encountered is necessarily evil; thus there is more call for character/monster interaction and a shift away from the boredom of hack and slay.

Finally, no consideration of alignment is complete without thinking about that bugbear of *AD&D*, the *know alignment* spell. With this spell, a third-level cleric can examine a roomful of people, pick out those that are evil (or good), and ensure that a carefully planned scenario fails. Framing a paladin as a convert to evil is impossible, because one spell will prove that his goodness is unsullied. And so on and so forth. *Know alignment* makes hiding a villain extremely difficult; this is one reason for opposing a formalised alignment system. But despair not! There are a number of ways of limiting the use of *know alignment*. The first is to take note of the fact that most normal people object to clerics finding out their alignment; thus if a cleric attempts to cast the spell openly, he or she will probably be mobbed, (losing the spell, but this is unlikely to be the hapless cleric's major concern!). Even if the cleric attempts it in private, there will be a chance that someone will come along and disturb him – if the use of the spell would ruin a scenario, make this a certainty! This is not particularly unfair; a sharp player should be able to to explain matters away to the intruder's satisfaction, and if he can't then he deserves what he gets. A second point is to take into account that the cleric may cast his spell more than ten minutes (ie the spell's duration) before the target turns up. A third answer, and the answer to random use of the spell, is to ensure that there are always more NPCs in the vicinity than the spell can test, thus reducing the chance of the cleric picking on someone important. Fourthly, a lawful cleric shouldn't use the spell where its use would be dishonourable, and even if the cleric is not lawful, lawful party members (especially paladins) should object bitterly to this invasion of another's privacy.

If all else fails, though, there are two other solutions. One is the reverse of *know alignment*, which foils a search, but might just raise a party's suspicions. A more subtle approach (most effective in inverse proportion to its use) is a magic item that gives a false reading; these are lethal, especially when a party relaxes its guard in the presence of someone who must be safe, because the spell says he's lawful good . . . And once the spell's veracity is dubious, it becomes virtually useless, raising the level of player doubt and paranoia, and returning mystery, intrigue and tension to the game. □

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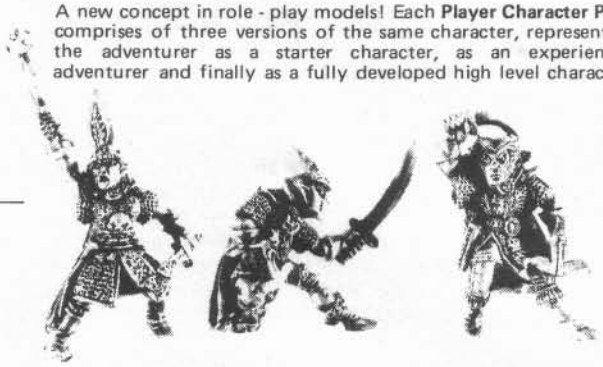

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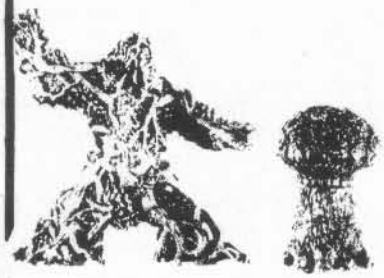

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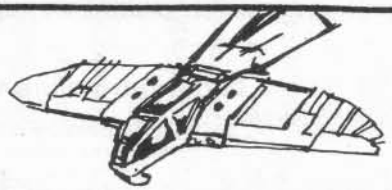

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RuneRites *is a bimonthly column for* RuneQuest *enthusiasts, edited by Dave Morris.*

Not Waving But Drowning

by Dave Lucas

This month, two water creatures. What makes David's submissions a little out-of-the-ordinary, I feel, is the way he has presented both the Fable and the Truth (ie rules) for each creature. Players should only *be aware of the Fable, of course – something which should be the case with every* RQ *beastie, but is unfortunately rarely enforced! –DM*

FOSSERGRIMS

STR:	4d6	**Move:**	8
CON:	2d6+6	**Hit points average:**	13
SIZ:	3d6	**Treasure factor:**	12
INT:	2d6+6	**Defence:**	05%
POW:	4d6		
DEX:	3d6		
CHA:	2d6+6		

Weapon	*SR*	*Attack*	*Damage*	*Parry*	*HP*
Broadsword	7	50%	1d8+1	40%	30
Bow	3	60%	1d8+1		

Armour: Aluminium chain hauberk and open helm.
Spells: About 7 points from *befuddle, co-ordination, glamour, harmonize, mobility*: may have others.
Skills: Swimming 100%; Spot Hidden 25%; Camouflage 30% (*but higher if a pool of water at the time! –DM*); Hide in Cover 50%; Speak Sea Tongue at INT×05%; Speak mother's language at INT×05%.

Fossergrims are a magical humanoid species tied to the runes of Water, Mobility and Man, and live 'parasitically' off humankind in much the same sense that dryads live off elves. They inhabit waterfalls, and are unable to travel far from their home, though they can breathe air as easily as water. A fossergrim in running water is fabled to be immune to harm – whether from magic or from weapons. It is also said that he never misses in combat, as long as his opponent is standing in water. Fossergrims are thought to be immortal. They can become a pool of water at will.

Fossergrims mate with human maidens who come to bathe in their waterfall. The offspring of such a union will appear almost normal if female – although perhaps with green eyes and an unusual affinity for water. However, if male then the child will manifest full fossergrim abilities, and at the onset of puberty will flee to seek his own waterfall. This is how the species continues itself, and all fossergrims are consequently male.

Notes: In running water a fossergrim has his defence doubled, he regenerates 2HP/round in the location of his choice, and his POW is raised by 10 for purposes of resisting magical attacks.

The fossergrim always has a 95% chance of hitting an opponent who is standing in water (96-00 still misses, 00 fumbles). This does *not* alter the chance of special or critical hits.

Fossergrims cannot live more than a mile away from their home falls: further than this they will lose STR and POW at a rate of 1 point per four hours until they die (whereupon they decompose into a pool of water). If their waterfall were diverted or somehow destroyed they would be affected in the same way.

This all-male race may, as previously stated, melt away into a pool of water. This process requires the expenditure of 2 points of battle magic POW, as does the reverse process. The reverse is not possible if the water is in a tightly contained place (eg bottled).

THE NEREID

STR:	2d6+2	**Move:**	8 (12 in water)
CON:	N/A		
SIZ:	3 to 18	**Hit points average:**	N/A
INT:	2d6+6	**Treasure factor:**	12
POW:	3d6+6	**Defence:**	20%
DEX:	4d6		
CHA:	5d6		

Weapon	*SR*	*Attack*	*Damage*
Spit	10	45%	Blind 2d10 minutes (range 5 metres)

Spells: *Glamour, demoralise, befuddle, mobility, shimmer 2.*
Skills: Swimming 100%, Spot Hidden 50%, Oratory 75%, Camouflage 95% in water.
Languages: Sea Tongue + 1d3 others.

The nereid is a spirit of Water, Mastery, and Man. The spirit is bound into some form of shawl or mantle, usually white or pale gold in colour. The spirit shapes and animates water to give itself a body, and this body can be formed or dissolved up to 5km from the shawl. The body is almost always formed as that of a slim, elfin woman, usually with lustrous green eyes and golden hair.

Men often find themselves unable to harm a nereid , and sometimes sit entranced for many hours watching one. Many men have been tempted to force a kiss from a nereid, but such attempts rarely succeed. Normally the nereid will merely melt away at first touch, leaving a pool of water. If they are caught and held firm, however, then they cannot escape, although they still struggle hard to break free. If a kiss is taken from such a sprite, most often the man will drown, but if he avoids this fate then ecstacy is his. There are rumours of nereids being magically bound and forced to serve as courtesan or consort to some powerful personage.

Notes: Any male humanoid must resist with his POW against the nereid's CHA or he will find himself unable to harm her. If such an individual fails a second roll, then he will just sit and stare at her, and will resist any attempt to move him. This effect can be removed by a *dispel magic 5*, otherwise the effect will be broken when the nereid is out of sight for five minutes or more. If the entranced character fails a third roll (which must be rerolled every five minutes that he is entranced) he will pursue the nereid for a kiss, and will attack to kill anyone who tries to restrain him or harm the nereid. This effect may only be countered by forcibly removing him from the nereid's locality. If the nereid is grappled then the grappler must pit his DEX against hers. If he succeeds then she has been held. If it does not succeed then she has slipped away and the grappler is left sitting in a pool of water. Each round that she is held, the nereid will try to break free (STR+DEX vs STR+DEX) and if she succeeds then she will again dissolve into water. To kiss the nereid will take 1d3+1 rounds; during each one the nereid must be restrained. Unless a CON×2 roll is made then the person kissing the nereid will start to drown. It will take him 1d6 rounds to get a breath, during which time he must roll for drowning damage, as unexpected immersion – see Appendix E of *RuneQuest*).

A nereid's spirit is in her shawl, and if this is possessed then she will obey orders out of fear (the nereid is 'killed' if the shawl is destroyed) but would do anything short of direct violence to get it back. Also, having the shawl does not negate the fascination effects, and someone who failed two rolls could easily be persuaded to give it back, perhaps for the (false) promise of not resisting his attentions afterwards.

The nereid can make shapes out of the water nearby her to defend herself. She may create one of the following at a time:

1. A wall of water. This takes two rounds to build up. It has a 3 metre wide front and any being in its way is attacked at 80% chance. A successful attack delivers a STR 20/SIZ 20 knockback. Also the person(s) hit must make CON×3 rolls for 1d3 rounds or take 1d8 drowning damage to the chest for each failure.

2. A fist of water. This takes three rounds to assemble and may be maintained for a number of rounds equal to the nereid's POW. It hits at 50% for 1d6+1d4 damage, and parries for the nereid at 65%. It acts as a medium shield in this respect.

3. Waves. These may be summoned in one round and may be maintained for as long as wanted. These reduce the swimming abilities of non-aquatic creatures by 75%.

The aqueous bodies of nereids are immune to harm from slashing or impaling weapons. Crushing weapons only have an effect on special or critical hits. A special crush disables the location hit for a number of rounds equal to half the damage that would be done. A critical does this for the full damage as a number of rounds. The shawl has 8HP and a STR of 12 for resistance to ripping.

Nereids are found in secluded pools or underground lakes. They are never found far from water. They range in temperament from flirty to vicious. □

THRUD THE BARBARIAN

Cults of the Dark Gods

Original Text by Prof Wolf von Archensbak, Translated for Call of Cthulhu by A J Bradbury

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This material is a translation of a part of the researches of Professor von Archensbak related to certain cults, or quasi-religions, believed to be connected with the plans of the Great Old Ones to resume their domination of our planet.

The Professor had originally intended to withhold this information until he had completed his major work on Cthulhu-orientated cults. After the recent death of the great Bulgarian scholar, Dr Philius Sadowsky, whilst he was preparing a definitive commentary on the *Necronomicon*, however, von Archensbak has asked me to prepare a synopsis of his findings for immediate publication.

THE VICTORY OF THE SANDS

Following the publication of my monograph on the Sigsand, or Sussex, Manuscript I have received a number of letters from self-styled 'fellow researchers'. In many cases these communicants were mere cranks of one persuasion or another. Yet in the midst of this nonsense certain information has been drawn to my attention, by one who wishes to remain anonymous, which has both confirmed certain data already in my possession and, more importantly, has fleshed out certain portions of that data which were hitherto sketchy and unclear.

As I stated in my earlier work, there can be little doubt that the Sigsand Manuscript is either wholly derived from some Arabic source, or at least depends upon such work for its central thesis. What was unclear to me when I wrote those words, however, was the identity of that original material.

Let me state, quite categorically, that the document to which I refer is still unknown to me. Nevertheless I am at least able to indicate the probable source of the Sigsand material, together with a list of the main groups, or cults, through which that teaching has been disseminated down the ages, even unto the present day.

As the American writer, H P Lovecraft, has so often observed, the time of the Great Old Ones' rule on Earth most surely preceeded our own times by many millenia. Yet the knowledge of their being, and of their power, together with the loathsome and blasphemous rites inspired by that knowledge, has persisted within isolated groups like some dreadful canker upon the soul and body of the human race.

Thus far had my researches led before new information was laid before me. A simple belief that such 'lost' peoples as the dreaded Tcho-Tcho of the Tsang plateau, the Abominable Snowmen of Mi-Go and the Deep Ones of Ponape, were the scattered remnants of the Old Ones' worshippers on Earth. How little I knew!

THE ASSASSINS

In tracing the history of that infamous and terrible cult of the *Hashishim*, more commonly called the Assassins, we must look to the deviant groupings of the Muslim faith.

The first, and most important schism within Islam was based upon differing attitudes regarding him whom they call The Prophet (ie Mohammed). On the one hand we have the Sunni's, who accept the Koran (as presented by The Prophet) as *the* source of religious authority. The main opposition group is that of the Shi'ite persuasion, which holds that every age has its own divinely inspired leader or Imam who has absolute, God-given authority over all men.

According to the Shi'ites each Imam has positively superhuman powers – handed down from age to age since Adam. To the Shi'ites, each Imam is, quite literally, the voice of God on earth.

As the Shi'ite sect began to emerge, being in the minority, it protected itself by resorting to secrecy. And when Shi'ism itself began to fragment this led to the formation of a whole range of new secret societies – most notably the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites are distinguished by their belief that Ishmael son of Ja'far was the seventh Imam and heir to the power and authority of Adam – all other Sunni's and Shi'ites believe Ishmael to have been an evil man legally deprived of the Imamate by his father. The Ishmaelite sect also gave rise to yet another sub-group, a secret society *within* a secret society! I refer, of course, to the Assassins.

So far as modern scholars, including my own source, have been able to ascertain the facts in this matter, the cult of the Assassins was established by Hassan ibn Sabah – the Old Man of the Mountains – in about 1090AD.

Ibn Sabah's nickname, allegedly accorded him by the Crusaders, tells us much about both parties. The term 'old man' could be derived from the idea of a wise man or sage, since Ibn Sabah himself was certainly not 'old' in years. It is quite possible, on the other hand, that 'old' was meant to refer to the alleged antiquity of Ibn Sabah's authority, which implies that some of the Crusaders at least were prepared to recognise that authority. The 'mountains' referred to are in northern Iraq, where Ibn Sabah had his personal stronghold at Alamut – 'The Eagle's Nest' – from which he and his successors directed a reign of terror which reached throughout the Arab world, and beyond.

But what was the real purpose behind the formation of this sect?

Certainly Hassan Ibn Sabah and the later Grand Masters of the sect were interested in power. Indeed there was a time, before their ambitions were temporarily thwarted by the arrival of Genghis Khan and the Mongol hordes, when it looked as though the Assassins might take control of the entire Muslim world.

The influence of the Assassins, as their name implies, was based primarily upon the practice of executing anyone who incurred the Master's displeasure or who offered a threat to the cult, either real or imagined. These executions were carried out by carefully trained and utterly dedicated killers called the *Fidavis*. The training is of particular interest since it involved certain mind altering techniques.

I have already mentioned that the Assassins were also known as the *Hashishim*. This alternative title relates to the practice of drugging initiates with hashish and then introducing them into a purpose-built 'heaven on earth' – a luxurious palace surrounded by beautiful gardens and inhabited by throngs of lovely women who attended to the initiate's every desire during his brief stay. After a suitable period of time the initiate was drugged again, returned to the Eagle's Nest, and told that he could only return to Paradise if the Master willed it, that is, if he unhesitatingly obeyed the Master's every command. The results of this process were remarkably successful.

The 'uniform' of the Assassins, who most certainly remain in existence even today, consisted of a white robe, a red belt and black or red boots. It should be noted, however, that just as they are skilled in the many means of killing so are they well trained in every aspect of the art of disguise. Their absolute obedience to the will of their masters is unparalleled, even by the deadly Ninjas of the East, since they have no fear of death but rather welcome it as the one road back to that paradise they have already experienced!

In the 13th century the invading Mongols, led by Genghis Khan's lieutenant, Halaku, seemed to have wiped out the Assassins as part of their drive to exterminate Islam. Yet when the Mongols were finally forced back by the Sultan of Egypt the Assassins re-emerged as strong as ever, not only in Syria (where their power had remained largely intact), but also in Persia, Afghanistan (where they called themselves the *Roshaniya* – the 'illuminated ones') and India (as the Thugees).

But the Assassins were no longer operating only in the Middle-East and India. By indirect means they had penetrated into the very heart of Christendom itself, thus providing the basis for every subsequent secret society of any note throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

The exact date for the foundation of the Knights Templar, like many other aspects of this ambiguous organisation, is almost impossible to fix with absolute precision. Some writers suggest 1118 or 1120AD, whilst others place it up to ten years earlier. What we can be sure of, however, is that by 1120AD *at the latest*, the first nine members of the order were securely installed in that part of the (Christian) King of Jerusalem's palace – that part which stood on the site of what had once been King Solomon's Temple.

Even at this early part of the history of the Templars we come across a series of intriguing paradoxes.

Firstly, it is alleged that Hugues de Payen, the first Master of the Order, and all his colleagues were 'poor' knights. Yet within a very short space of time following the foundation of the Order the knights began to send large sums of money back to France, specifically to the Abbot of the Cistercian monastery at Clairvaux – Saint Bernard. This was extremely fortunate, from the monk's point of view, since it lifted them from being on the verge of bankruptcy to a position as one of the most influential orders in the Western world.

Secondly, there is the question of the seemingly instant acceptance of the founder knights by King Baudouin I. By what means were the nine able to gain such immediate and extensive favours?

Thirdly, we must examine the Templars' declared objective – to make the roads of Palestine safe for pilgrims and other travellers. Yet how could they hope to succeed in such a massive task? Their seal emphasised their alleged poverty by showing two knights upon a single horse. Even with a horse apiece, how could nine men police such a large area single handed? And lastly, who were they guarding the roads against?

In 1127 a majority of the Templars, including Hugues de Payen, returned to France where they were welcomed as 'the epitome and apotheosis of Christian values'! De Payen was officially proclaimed the Grand Master (!) of the Knights of the Order of the Temple, a semi-religious order of warrior-monks. It was also at this time that they were granted the *exclusive* right to wear white mantles over their armour adorned with a red cross on the left side.

One hundred and eighty years later, the Templars were so rich that they had become the bankers of Europe, so powerful that they recognised allegiance to no one, not even the Pope, yet at the same time they were reviled on all sides as despotic, degenerate devil-worshippers.

I can hardly think that I need to impress upon my readers the many similarities between the Assassins on the one side, and the Templars on the other. Indeed, many of those who came into contact with the Templars quickly learnt that the sect had adopted many of the Assassins' ideas and methods.

[*Translator's Note*: At this point Professor Archensbak's notes become totally fragmentary. In essence he merely outlines the conflict which arose between Phillipe IV – Phillipe le Bel – and the Templars, which Archensbak attributes primarily to the Templars' growing arrogance towards everyone, from the Pope downwards, and more importantly to the fact that Phillipe was heavily in debt to the Templars with little or no hope of being able to pay that debt.]

When two Popes in succession refused to help Phillipe in his plan to suppress the Templars, both died under suspicious circumstances. Phillipe was thus able to have his own candidate elected to the office, and in less than two years a list of charges of blasphemy had been drawn up, and the Templars' strongholds had been overthrown.

Amongst the charges drawn up against the Templars two, in particular, are worthy of note. In the first it was alleged that all Templars, on entering the order, were required to reject Jesus Christ as a false prophet and to spit and trample upon a crucifix placed on the floor for this purpose. The second charge concerns something, possibly a sculpture of a bearded head, which was called Bafomet, said to have been held in the highest reverence.

On the subject of the renunciation of Christ by the members of what was apparently a Christian order I will have more to say later. For the moment let me merely suggest a parallel between this practise and the Assassins' effective rejection of Mohammed.

The matter of Bafomet may be dealt with immediately, since there can be little doubt as to its true significance.

Many scholars have worried over the name Bafomet, not only because of the uncertainty as to what it was, but also because this Arabic-sounding word is not found in that language in that exact form. Yet we hardly need to look far for an explanation. For there is indeed a very similar word in Arabic, namely *abufihamet* – which breaks down as *abu*, meaning 'father of' or 'source of', and *fihamet* (from the root word *fehm*), meaning 'wisdom' or 'understanding'.

If we then take Bafomet to mean 'father of wisdom' are we not led inexorably back to the Assassins yet again, and their belief in the Imam of the age – their own Grand Master – as the only true source of all knowledge.

Moreover, despite the praise heaped upon them as defenders of the Holy Land, the Templars actually fought only when it suited them to do so, and even then it was not always only on behalf of their fellow Crusaders.

So, now, we have seen the Assassins as a cult dedicated to the pursuit of power, though not averse to the accumulation of wealth – through murder, kidnapping and blackmail – when the opportunity arose.

The Templars, on the other hand, seem to have had little interest in power for its own sake, except as a means of protecting their own interests. Their dedication to the pursuit of wealth in all its forms, however, was legendary, almost obsessive.

So what happened to the Templars, and to their vast wealth?

As an organisation they were broken up by the raids staged by Philippe IV in 1307. In 1312 the Order was officially disbanded, by papal decree, and in 1314 the last Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake by command of Phillipe.

Yet this was hardly the end of the Templars. In the first place their treasure was never found, nor has it been discovered up to the time at which I write. As for the individual members, comparatively few were seized, and even fewer put to death. The survivors undoubtedly found 'new' allegiances elsewhere.

Some knights simply moved from France to Prussia where they would undoubtedly have been welcomed by highly sympathetic knights of the Teutonic Order. Others, taking advantage of the war which was in progress between Scotland and England took the road to the Highlands, where the papal decree had been totally ignored. In both cases the exiles did not simply rest on the memories of their past. Rather they began to build the foundations of new orders. One society, created by the exiles in Scotland, became what we now know as Freemasonry. Those in Germany, with a far greater dedication to secrecy, borrowed their new title from the Afghans. They became the Illuminati. □

Further revelations about the 'Cults of the Dark Gods' will be appearing in later issues of White Dwarf.

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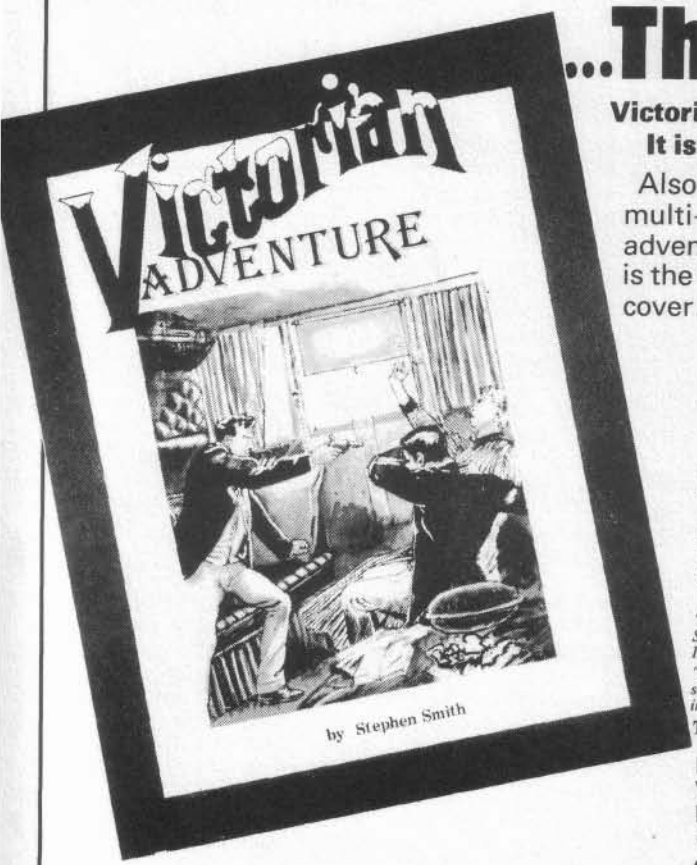

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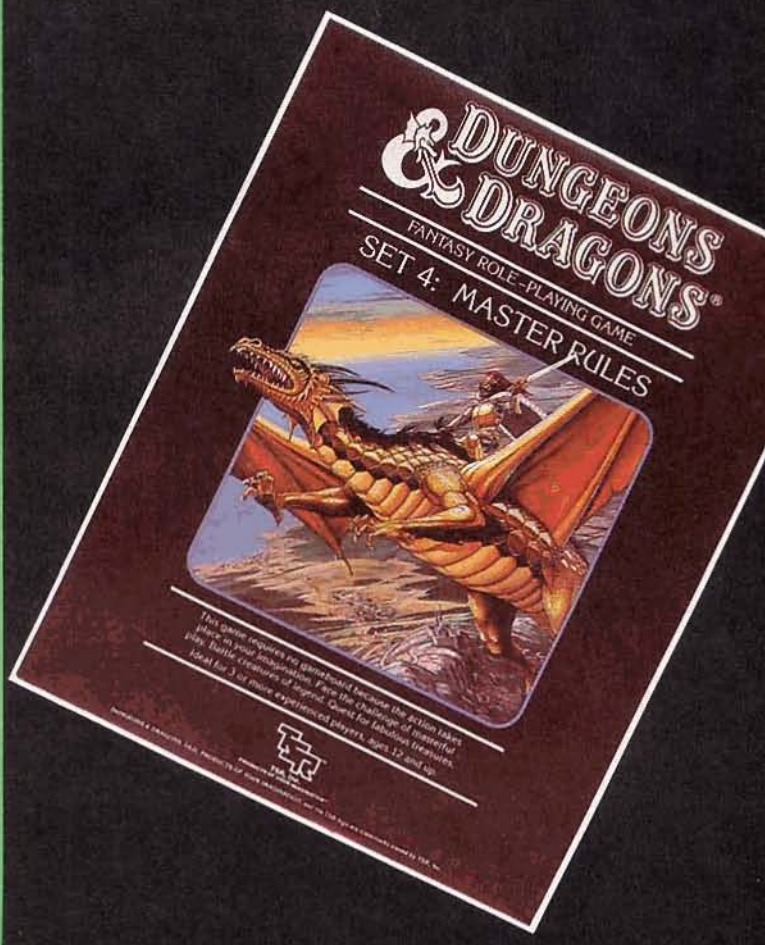

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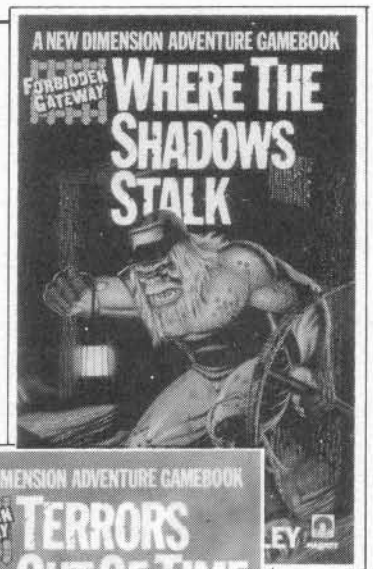

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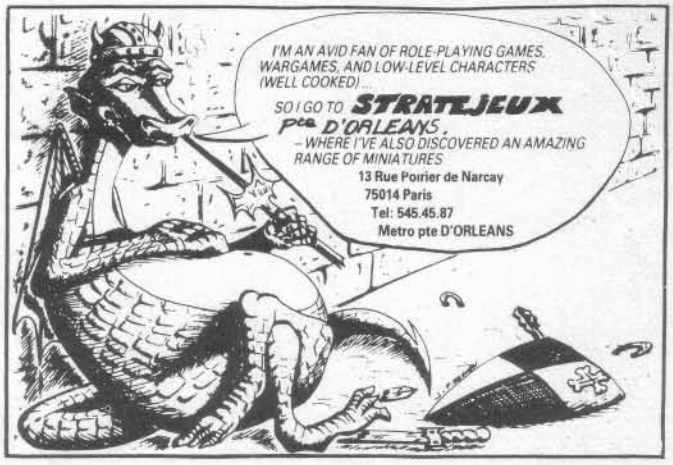

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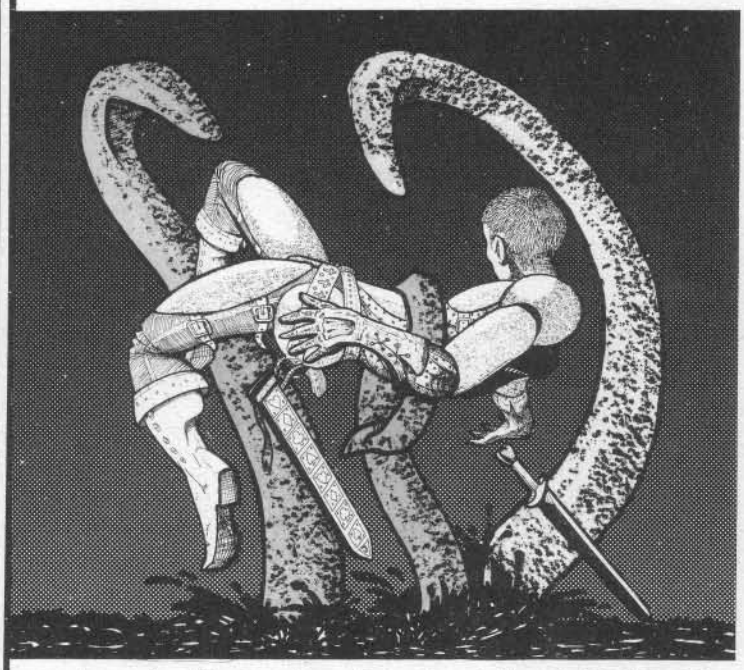

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A Box of Old Bones

A Dragon Warriors/AD&D adventure for six characters of 1st-2nd level, by Dave Morris

DM'S INTRODUCTION

The life of an adventurer is constantly threatened by the powers of evil and darkness, and the advantage of owning a relic is obvious. Relics – fragments or personal effects of a saint – possess sacred power. Monasteries prize these items for another reason, however. Possession of a relic gives the monastery status and prestige. Still more mundanely, a monastery which owns a renowned relic is more likely to attract notice, to receive the rich endowments that nobles hand out in their pious moments. Men (even holy men) being what they are, this means that fake relics abound, and monasteries vie for ownership of the authentic ones with a zeal that is often all too secular.

This, then, is a tale of human greed . . .

Osterlin Abbey houses a priceless relic: the mortal remains of St Giles. Great lords and ladies come from far away to venerate the relic, often bringing lavish gifts for the Abbey's coffers. The monks of Osterlin live well as a result.

Recently, a knight called Notker of Balcom was engaged by the monks of a rival abbey who wish to obtain the relic. They had already sent one of their number to join Osterlin as a novice, and thus have a spy within the abbey walls. Their spy had assessed the lay brothers whose job it is to guard the relic. When the time was ripe, he bribed those he deemed most venal so that they would allow Notker to enter the church at dead of night and substitute the bones of some nonentity for those of the famous saint.

The plan is for Notker to visit the abbey for a few days. One of the travelling-chests of his entourage will contain a skeleton which he can switch for the true relic on the last night of his visit. The theft should not be detected until he is long gone – if, indeed, it ever is.

But this elegant plan has developed a fatal flaw at its outset. The spy misjudged the character of one of those he tried to bribe; as soon as he had pocketed the money, this man went secretly to the abbot and told him what had happened. Seeing a means to embarrass the rival monks, weed out untrustworthy lay brothers, and even pick up a little cash from the bribes the spy was offering, Father Eorwin instructed him to give no indication that anything was amiss. 'Accept further bribes as they are offered, invent difficulties for which you will need even more. Breathe no word of this to any other lay brother, for others may not have your own exemplary nature.'

As the lay brother left (perhaps happily contemplating the advancement which he had surely secured for himself), the abbot began to make plans of his own. Calling the monks together in the Chapter House, he told them the whole story. Many were outraged, demanding immediate expulsion of the guilty lay brothers and some form of action against the rival order. Eorwin lifted his hand for silence. 'But if they want our relic so badly,' he said with a smile half saintly and half rather devilish, 'we should allow them to steal it . . . '

The relic was quietly removed to the abbot's house for temporary safekeeping. Thus, unbeknown to Notker and his accomplices, they will merely be switching their skeleton for another that is no more sacred.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

You have often heard travellers mention Osterlin Abbey, famous for the bones of St Giles the Martyr that are kept in a reliquary in the church there. The hospitality shown to wayfarers is scarcely less famous, and perhaps this is why, on your way to Hesard's Ford, you consider it worth a slight detour to visit the abbey.

It is late in the afternoon as you approach. Wintry sunlight sparkles off the brook that provides the monks with drinking water and a plentiful supply of fish. A few peasants in shabby rags wander in a line through the meadows. They have just collected pork and grain from the abbey's almonry. Lay brothers have been hard at work threshing or ploughing the fields, but now they are hurrying back for vespers.

You are met by a slightly built monk who seems to be the guest-master. 'Alas!' he says, shaking his head as you approach. 'We cannot take you in. Sir Notker of Balcom and his retinue presently occupy the larger of our guest houses, while the other must be kept ready for a group of pilgrims who will be arriving shortly. I am sorry.'

'What are you saying, Giraldus?' calls out an elderly monk who has been helping pass out the alms. 'Would you have these good people sleep in the fields, with this cold wind coming down from the north? There are a few pallets in the lay brothers' dormitory, I'm sure.'

Brother Giraldus complies at once. As he leads you away towards the lay brothers' dormitory, he tells you that the elderly monk was Eorwin, the abbot.

THE ABBEY

1. Smaller Guesthouse. The guest-master, Brother Giraldus, and two assistants occupy a room here. The other rooms are empty, awaiting the arrival of a pilgrim group on the morrow.

2. Larger Guesthouse. This is where Notker and his companions have been staying.

3. Well.

4. Almonry.

5. Stables.

6. Fishpond.

7. Orchard. There are apple and pear trees here, and a number of beehives clustered by the cellarium.

8. Lay Brothers' Dormitory. This occupies the top floor of the building, above the cellarium (store-room) and lay brother's frater, or living quarters. The player characters will be sharing it with the menials from Notker's entourage and with some fifty lay brothers and novices. Apart from Cadric, all the NPCs here are normal men with no combat experience.

9. The Cloister. The hub of monastic life. The section adjacent to the church constitutes the scriptorium. Here, in bays called carrels, the monks spend part of each day reading and copying manuscripts.

10. Water-trough. This stone bowl has running water for the monks to wash their hands before dinner.

11. Kitchen.

12. Dining Hall.

13. Calefactory. A fire burns here throughout the day in winter, so that any monk who gets too cold while working in the scriptorium can come to warm his hands.

14. Monks' Dormitory. (Over the monks' frater (common room).) The dormitory extends above the chapter house and library right up to the south transept of the church. From here, the night stairs (**24d**) lead down into the church. There are some twenty-five monks usually resident in the dormitory, and none of these have more than basic fighting skill.

15. The Abbot's Lodging. This is Father Eorwin's private house, usually also occupied by a couple of monks or lay brothers to act as his secretary and servant.

16. Reredorter, or latrine. An ingenious sewage system leads underground into the stream.

17. Chapter House. (Ground floor with dormitory over.) The monks assemble here daily to discuss the running of the abbey and other secular business.

18. Library. This houses about two hundred scrolls and five hundred books – many of the latter chained up. Even if they could gain access here (it is kept

locked, and only the librarian, claustral prior and Father Eorwin have keys) most adventurers would find the contents rather boring.

19. Chapel attached to the infirmary.

20. Infirmary for the treatment of sick and elderly monks. The infirmarian here is Brother Odilo, a jovial fellow whose cheeks are often flushed with drink. He sees to all medical treatment as well as the blood-letting which every monk enjoys twice yearly. In these tasks Odilo substitutes enthusiasm and goodwill in place of medical skill.

21. Infirmary Kitchen.

22. Barn.

23. Mill.

24. The Church. By night this is an eerie place, illuminated only by the red glare of the sanctuary lamp and the moonbeams streaming through stained glass windows. The first service of the day, consisting of Nocturns and then the Lauds of the Dead, takes place a half-hour after midnight. The various parts of the church are:

a. The nave.

b. Rood-screen; a large carved and painted screen surmounted by a crucifix.

c. A newel stairway that leads up to the belfry and down to the undercroft. Several abbots and prestigious benefactors are buried in the undercroft (others are in the graveyard outside).

d. Night stairs down from the monks' dormitory. When the PCs come upon Notker *et al*, the stairwell will be occupied by the ghostly manifestation of Adamnan's magic *Whispering Hat*.

e. Chancel, with altar and decorated with ornate panelling.

f. Sacristy.

g. Chantry chapel bequeathed by Gefmund, father of the present baron.

h. Reliquary chapel. The cause of all the trouble is kept here, in a silver casket inlaid with mother-of-pearl and supported by two partly gilded silver angels. Tonight, of course, the remains of St Giles reside elsewhere and the bones of an old peasant are accorded a temporary honour.

THE ADVENTURE

Evening

The characters are given pallets in the lay brothers' dormitory. This is certainly unusual for persons of any standing (presumably some of the characters, at least, will be knights), but is sometimes necessary at important abbeys such as this, which may have to accommodate several groups at once. If any of the characters are sorcerers, they would know to keep quiet about it. Sorcerers, often thought pagan, are rarely welcome at a monastery.

Many of the lay brothers were taken in by the monks at a very early age and have spent their whole lives around the cloister. Some were freemen who joined in later life, but these are still for the most part young men. One is of the gentry – Cadric (see stats); he is still learning to be humble, and may become very belligerent if the characters try to treat him in an overbearing manner.

Along with the lay brothers, they are sharing the dormitory with the menials from Notker's entourage. If they care to question these menials, they will soon discover they are not peasants from Notker's manor (as might be expected), but were hired at a good rate from the village of Ashmore. Ashmore lies some three days' journey away, on the far side of Helfax Wood. It seems that when Notker first arrived there he was travelling with a group of monks. If the characters are beginning to shown an interest in their tale, the menials will expect a few silver pieces for the last titbit: the monks who were with Notker were not from Osterlin Abbey.

Supper

Supper follows vespers. Everyone, including guests and lay brothers, eats together. The characters sit at Father Eorwin's table along with Notker and his retinue, but no talking is permitted as one of the monks is reading aloud from Barnabas' *Life of St Giles*. The long tables are a flurry of motion as the monks converse in sign-language, while the abbot and his guests sit in quiet dignity.

Their first impression of Notker is of an intense, hard-faced knight in early middle age. He seems always alert, watching like a hawk, assessing everything and everyone with sharp intelligence. Not a man to cross. With him are four men and a woman. Three of the men are obviously knights, while the fourth – a short, pudgy fellow with short grey hair – may be Notker's personal priest. The woman may be a nun, for she wears the black robes worn by nuns or widows.

Supper is frugal for all but the abbot and his guests – but this is, after all, one of the more luxurious monasteries. Most serve only one meal a day. The meal over, the brothers and lay brothers file off to the church for the short service of compline. Most will then retire gratefully to the dormitories, exhausted from their long day, though a few may walk a while in the cloister, or spend half an hour chatting in the parlour.

Father Eorwin, with Giraldus the guest-master and the claustral prior, Willibrord, take all the guests to the abbot's lodgings. They are offered some of the fine minty liqueur that the monks prepare, and there is the chance for a little conversation. Astute characters may notice a certain coldness between Adamnan (the grey-haired, tubby 'priest') and Lady Marianne (the 'nun'). Notker himself talks distractedly, as if preoccupied. The three knights – Einhard, Grost and Denchille – are glum military types who keep to themselves and seem uncomfortable with small talk, though they can be drawn into enthusiastic discussion on such subjects as campaigning, warhorses, jousts and the finer points of swordplay.

Before very long, Notker gets to his feet. He thanks the monks for their hospitality and, noting their tiredness, bids them goodnight. All the guests see this as the cue to turn in. Willibrord shows the characters back to the lay brothers' dormitory.

Night-time

One of the characters comes awake to see a grotesque shadow looming over his pallet. He sits bolt upright, but manages to stifle a cry of alarm when he sees that it is just the shadow cast by one of the stone figures that adorn the cloister roof. Sweating, he gets up and goes over the window to breathe in the fresh night air. The stone figure squats outside the narrow window. Whimsically following its gaze, he sees a strange thing: a man in a large cloak steps furtively from the dark cloisters into the courtyard below. Starkly visible for a moment in the light of the moon, he dips his hand into the water-trough and brings out a small item that was concealed there. After a quick glance about, he darts back into the enveloping shadows of the cloister.

The GM should have selected a responsible and responsive player character for this – one who will realize that something suspicious is afoot and wake his companions. Attempts to wake the lay brothers will be mostly unsuccessful. This is because Adamnan the sorcerer is using his *Hand of Glory*, an occult talisman which holds 0th rank/level characters in deep sleep. If they go around the whole dormitory, they will be able to awaken only Cadric, Gondris the spy and three others whose monastic discipline makes them equivalent to a ranked character. Of course, if Gondris is woken

then he will slip away at the first opportunity and hurry straight to the church to warn Notker.

Trying to wake the lay brothers would cost the player characters time that they may not wish to waste. The same can be said of armouring up, and in fact only the most wretchedly uncouth of characters would don heavy armour in the monastery without a very good and proven reason. The GM may allow a boorish and timorous barbarian to pull on a mail shirt if he insists on doing so, but others barely have time to put on leather jerkins.

After descending the stairs to the cloister, the characters notice a flicker of lantern light beyond the scriptorium. This is quickly cut off by a heavy door closing. Someone is in the church – and there is no sign of the four lay brothers who should be standing guard on the church steps.

Interlude: Notker's plan

By means of his bribes, Notker ensured that the church keys would be secreted in the water-trough where he could easily obtain them. The four lay brothers who should be guarding the church have been paid off. At Notker's signal, they fetched out the two monks who normally stand watch directly in front of the reliquary chapel, claiming they had seen intruders crossing the lawn between the infirmary and the graveyard. The monks (who were pleased to go along with this diversion) took two of the lay brothers on a tour of the abbey grounds. The remaining two guards waited until they saw Notker approaching and then hurried off towards the orchard. If anything goes wrong with the theft, they can later claim to have gone looking for the others.

At this point it is about a quarter to midnight – almost an hour before the monks are due to come down to sing Nocturns. Notker's intention was to enter the church, have Adamnan place the *Whispering Hat* (qv) at the bottom of the night stairs so that no sleepless monk would overhear anything, then quickly substitute his bag of bones for what he thinks is the true relic.

He has nearly accomplished this when a complication arises. A monk called Cedric has been travelling from Clyster Port for the last few weeks and has returned at this late hour. He is accompanied by a man he met on his journey, Ruttgur of the Knights Capellars. Both men being extremely devout, they have entered the church by the porch door at the west end of the nave (normally locked of course, but Cedric has a key) in order to say a short prayer before retiring. Thus neither knows anything about Notker's theft, or Father Eorwin's plan to turn the tables on him. As they round the rood screen they come face to face with Notker and his group. With the gate of the reliquary chapel open and the keys in his hand, they have caught Notker in the act of committing the crime. The player characters should arrive on the scene around this point in time.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Villains

Notker of Balcom intends to divest the abbey of its great relic, the bones of St Giles. With him are his three trusty retainers – Einhard, Grost and Denchille. His monastic employers hope for a smooth and uneventful robbery which may not be detected for many months, but just in case anything goes wrong they have provided two magical helpers in the form of Adamnan the sorcerer and Lady Marianne. If anything should upset the plan (as Ruttgur, Cedric and the player characters hopefully will) Adamnan's *astral gate* scroll should allow for a dramatic exit. (Remember that it will take Adamnan four rounds to prepare this spell if he needs it: one to take out the scroll and three to visualize his destination – an ancient stone circle near the village of Ashmore.)

Notker of Balcom

Formerly a knight of the most chivalrous and noble sort, Notker became embittered by the atrocities he witnessed on the Crusade. In middle-age he has become a sometime adventurer and agent for anyone who can pay him to do their dirty work. This is more out of world-weariness than greed or bad character. He has no desire to see anyone hurt, and his sword has remained sheathed until the point when Ruttgur attacks him in church. Years of adventuring have taught Notker to think on his feet – he can change his plans quickly and cleverly. If things are going very badly, he will abort the mission (probably escaping through Adamnan's *astral gate*) rather than struggling on to the bitter end.

DW: 4th rank Knight; ATT:18; DEF:12; Sword (d8,4); AF1; 16HP; EV6; MAG DEF 8; STR:13; RF:15; INT:16; PSY:13; LK:12. *Shielding Charm.*
AD&D: AC7; LVL3; HP19; Fighter; Human; LN; STR:13; INT:16; WIS:15; DEX:15; CON:14; CHA:17. Bastard sword, *Ring of Protection +1.*

Adamnan

A small fat man who is impressive more for the magical items he possesses than for any personal power. He is timid, and in any confrontation will keep well out of danger. His face is often damp with perspiration and his eyes may be a little watery from too much drink. The latter, combined with his reluctance to use sorcery on consecrated ground, gives him a 10% chance of miscasting any spell.

DW: 3rd rank Sorcerer; ATT:10; DEF:5; Dagger (d4,3); AF0; 7HP; EV3; MAG ATT 17; MAG DEF 7; 12 magic points; STR:6; RF:12; INT:12; PSY:14; LK:8. *The Whispering Hat, Hand of Glory, Scroll of astral gate, Casket of Fays.*
D&D: AC10; LVL2; HP5; MU; Human; CN; STR:6; INT:12; WIS:13; DEX:12; CON:7; CHA:6. Dagger. Spells: 1st level – *charm, sleep*. Items as for *DW*.

Special Items

The Whispering Hat. If turned inside out and placed on the floor in front of an arch or doorway, this black felt hat gives rise to an insubstantial shadowy figure. The figure has the vague outline of a tall man in a spreading cloak and felt hat. It does not attack or move, being merely a visual manifestation of the spell involved. Even the loudest clamour and shouting is muffled by the spell so that from the other side of the figure it can be heard only as a faint whisper – hence the name.

Hand of Glory. This is the severed and preserved hand of a suicide. The candle gripped in its stiff fingers gives off a light that only Adamnan can see by. While alight, it prevents slumbering characters of 0th rank/level from awakening. This effect extends over both dormitories, though in fact many of the monks count as higher than 0th level by virtue of their spiritual tranquillity and strength. The *Hand of Glory* will burn for about fifteen minutes, and can be extinguished only by blood (of which Adamnan carries a vial), milk or *Holy Water.*

Scroll. This fine parchment contains an *astral gate* [*AD&D*: 15th level *teleport*] spell. It was scripted by a sorcerer in Beltayn and obtained for Adamnan's use in this specific mission (at considerable expense to his employers). It is designed for affording a rapid escape route if anything should go wrong.

The Casket of Fays. This is Adamnan's most extraordinary item, though he does not fully understand its workings. It is a small silver-bound pine coffer. Each time it is opened, some strange and unpredictable effect results. Adamnan believes that it may be used twice a day, but if opened a third time, all the fays would escape and its power would be gone. Actually he is mistaken; the *Casket* may be opened any number of times without draining its power, though eventually it will be retrieved by its makers (see *13* below). The *Casket's* effects are:

1. A tendril of green flame snakes out of the *Casket* to strike a single target within 10m. The user can specify the target, but if he does not then the flame will double back and hit him. (Treat as a *dragonbreath/magic missile* spell.)

2. Everyone within 10m is struck dumb for one minute [*AD&D*: acts as the spell *silence, 15' radius*].

3. A haunting siren song emanates from the *Casket.* Characters must roll equal to or under their rank/level on 1d20 or stand entranced. The roll must be made each round unless the character can block his ears. The duration of the song is set by a Spell Expiry Roll (*AD&D*: 10 rounds), unless cut short by closing the *Casket.*

4. A foul plague of grey rats pour from the *Casket* and rush away in all directions, only to vanish mysteriously when they reach cover such as a wall, thicket or shadows. They attack no one, but all characters in the vicinity have a 10% chance of contracting the Black Death [*AD&D*: skin/respiratory disorder].

5. A random sorcery [*AD&D*: magic-user] spell of 1st-8th level is cast upon any one specified character within 10m. The user of the *Casket* does not know in advance what this spell will be – it could just as well be baneful as beneficial.

6. Utter darkness fills a zone of 10m radius, and no creature or spell can see within it [*AD&D*: as *light*, reversed]. This effect also prevents the user from seeing. The darkness lasts until cancelled by a Spell Expiry Roll [*AD&D*: 10 rounds] or until the lid is closed.

7. An illusory duplicate of one (randomly determined) character within 10m

is formed. This moves and speaks according to the *Casket* user's mental commands, but has no power to harm a character even if believed. Unless dispelled by shutting the lid, it lasts until its Spell Expiry Roll comes up [*AD&D*: 10 rounds].

8. An unaccountable blizzard blows out of the *Casket*, affecting anyone in front of it in a roughly 90° arc to a distance of 10m. Torches and unshuttered lanterns are extinguished and characters must roll under their strength on d20 [*AD&D*: save vs paralysis] each round or pass out from the extreme cold. The blizzard lasts 1-6 rounds whether or not the lid is closed. A character caught in it for more than four rounds suffers 1d6 HP frostbite damage (but only 1d4 if clad in thick furs, protected by a *survival* spell, etc). [*AD&D*: damage halved if *resist cold* cast.]

9. The user opens the *Casket* and pulls out a spriggan. *DW*: ATT:9; DEF:9; Barbs (d10,1); AF1; 1d4+1HP; EV8; MAG ATT:16; MAG DEF:6; move 25m. *AD&D*: AC6; HP 1d6; scratches for 1-2; saves vs spells as 5th level.

There is a 70% chance that the spriggan will attack a character whom the user points out, and a 30% chance it will attack one of his own companions (though it will never turn on the user himself). In addition to normal attacks, this vicious little fiend can attempt to *curse* seven times a day; this ability affects one victim within 15m. In *Dragon Warriors* use the normal curse rules or the special table in *Book Three*; for *AD&D*, treat as a cleric's *bestow curse* for effect. The spriggan does not vanish until it is killed.

10. A booming voice from the *Casket's* depths speaks the name of the most powerful character within 10m. Only if there is no other person within 10m will the user be named. The victim suffers a 1d20 *fright attack* [*AD&D*: save vs spells] which may leave him rigid with fear for 2-8 rounds.

11. A storm of pine needles streams from the *Casket*. Anyone within 10m who was facing the user must roll under reflexes [*AD&D*: dexterity] on d20 or be blinded for the next 2-12 rounds. The effect lasts for five rounds, and no one can approach the user until it subsides. It is impossible to close the lid while the pine needles are shooting out.

12. Seven vampire bats [*AD&D*: three stirges] flap out of the *Casket* and swoop to attack a foe indicated by the user. Unless slain, these creatures remain until dissolved into shadows by a Spell Expiry Roll [*AD&D*: 10 rounds]. If the *Casket* is shut before they have vanished, they abandon their original victim and return to attack the user.

13. Dank fog swirls around the user. There is a smell of soil and trees and cloying mushrooms. Tall figures glide forward, then half-glimpsed hands wrench the *Casket* from him. The fog dissipates, leaving no trace of the mysterious figures or the *Casket of Fays*.

Unless otherwise stated above, the user of the *Casket* is not affected by its powers.

Marianne
A slender, imperious woman in early middle age (about thirty). She affects the sombre habit of a nun or genteel widow, though she belongs to neither category. The reality is that she is a mystic. She was hired, like Adamnan, to provide magical back-up on this mission; the two of them maintain a vitriolic rivalry.

DW: 3rd rank Mystic; ATT:12; DEF:7; unarmed; AF0; 8HP; EV3; MAG DEF 6; STR:7; RF:10; INT:12; PSY:14; LK:12.
AD&D: AC8; LVL2; HP6; Illusionist; Human (female); CN; STR:7; INT:15; WIS:8; DEX:16; CON:12; CHA:7. Unarmed. Spells: 1st level – *colour spray, hypnotism*.

Einhard, Grost and Denchille
These three stalwarts have been with Notker for years. He paupered himself to get the four of them to the Holy Land, and they have been doggedly loyal to him ever since. They are very unimaginative except in matters military, and for the purposes of this scenario they may be treated as average in all characteristics (including reflexes of 11).

DW: 2nd rank Knights; ATT:14; DEF:8; Sword (d8,4); AF1; 12,14,11 HP; EV4; MAG DEF: 4.
AD&D: AC9; LVL1; HP7,10,5; Fighter; Human; LN. Longswords.

Others
The other two NPCs who will definitely become embroiled in the adventure are Ruttgur and Cedric. They will be fighting against Notker's group – probably, but not certainly, alongside the PCs. One of the lay brothers, Cadric, is also detailed here as he may get involved. Other monks should be treated as untrained normal men, if needed.

Ruttgur
A tall, broad-shouldered warrior who recently returned from the Crusade. His white tabard with eight-pointed indigo cross on the chest mark him out as one of the Knights Capellars, a fighting order formed in the last few years to protect pilgrims and settlers in the Holy Land. Unlike most people, Ruttgur has no reservations about spilling blood in a church or anywhere else. He is a violent fanatic, and behaves in just the way that a good Capellar is supposed to behave.

DW: 4th rank Knight; ATT:18; DEF:12; Two-handed sword (d10+1,6); AF4; 15HP; EV5; MAG DEF:7; STR:17; RF:13; INT:12; PSY:13; LK:14.
AD&D: AC5; LVL3; HP17; Fighter; Human; LN; STR:17; INT:12; WIS:10; DEX:13; CON:13; CHA:16. Two-handed sword.

Brother Cedric
Cedric, an intense dedicated man, has been absent from the abbey for over a month. Consequently he knows nothing about the plot and counter-plot. If the player characters side with Ruttgur then he may leave them and run to wake the monks. Remember that he will have to pass through the shadowy figure formed by the *Whispering Hat* in order to reach the night stairs, and he has no way of knowing that it cannot hurt him. If the player characters throw in their lot with Notker, Cedric will have to take up his staff and wade in – he will not leave Ruttgur to fight them alone, and the Capellar will not retreat.

DW: 1st rank non-adventurer; ATT:12; DEF:6; Quarterstaff (d6,3); AF1; 7HP; EV4; MAG DEF:3; STR:13; RF:14; INT:12; PSY:9; LK:11.
AD&D: AC10; LVL0; HP4; Normal man; Human; LN; STR:13; INT:12; WIS:12; DEX:14; CON:12; CHA:13. Staff.

Cadric
A young gentleman who recently joined the abbey as a lay brother. He has a quick temper which he is trying devoutly to curb. He occasionally guards the relic (though not tonight), and for this purpose he keeps a heavy iron-shod crucifix by his pallet. In the event of trouble, this serves very effectively as a mace.

DW: 1st rank knight; ATT:14, DEF:7; Mace (d6,4); AF0; 9HP; EV4; MAG DEF:3; STR:14; RF:9; INT:11; PSY:14; LK:13.
AD&D: AC10; LVL1; HP5; Fighter; Human; LN; STR:14; INT:11; WIS:6; DEX:9; CON:11; CHA:10. Mace.

Gondris
Gondris is the lay brother who has been acting as Notker's cloister spy. At the first hint of trouble he will try to warn Notker, if this seems possible without jeopardising his own safety. After that he will make his getaway over the orchard wall.

EPILOGUE

The scenario should allow for a talked-out solution or a dénouement with drawn swords, according to the tastes of the gaming group. (But PCs who prefer a subtle approach, and would rather offer Notker a chance to give himself up, will have their hands full calming Ruttgur down.)

If Notker escapes with the skeleton, Father Eorwin may offer the characters the job of going after him. This is only for the sake of appearances – he doesn't care about getting the bones back, but the rival monks would be suspicious if no force were sent out to retrieve the 'relic'. Eorwin wants them to put their stolen skeleton on show with all pomp before he reveals it to be fake. This alternative leads to the characters becoming innocent dupes, of course – the pawns in a game played by far more influential men – but any grudges they develop against the NPCs in question can only be good for the long-term campaign.

If Notker is caught, or at least prevented from accomplishing his theft, the characters can expect some gratitude from the monks. Some, but not much – they may have acted from the very best of motives, but in effect they only blundered in and spoiled a perfectly good bluff. Small consolation comes from the fact that they now have firm friends in Brother Cedric and Ruttgur, who might have been in for a long spell in the infirmary if they hadn't come along when they did!

Characters who try something crazy like teaming up with Notker or dashing through *astral gate* after him will not benefit much from the adventure. They should get few experience points, and Notker will soon manage to lose them. □

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AVIONICS FAILURES

Losing Your Long-Range Eyes by James Cooke

All ships possess avionics of some description; they may range from a simple Basic Sensor Package in a merchantman to a permanent ECM system in a warship. These, like computers, are affected by radiation damage, but there is no system which actually covers their failure in the *Traveller* game.

This article introduces such a system. It may mean extra work for the referee, but it can add more depth to a campaign or adventure. For instance, the players may own an old and failing Far Trader, whose avionics are about as reliable as the autochef . . . or consider the Scoutship that finds itself navigating in the dark, when what was once its sensor package is now a smoking panel in the corner . . .

Avionics are usually accessible from the bridge and require the removal of several inspection panels if they are to be repaired. The time for a repair varies with the seriousness of the fault. The time required to fix it should never be less than about 20 minutes, taking into account fault-finding and the like.

Avionics failures are not always evident, either. The players' set may fail, taking a positive result as being false information, with no one being any the wiser. Eventually, periodic maintenance or experience would reveal the fault; however, it does provide several interesting possibilities for the referee in the short term. Remember, at space combat ranges all they know is what their sensors tell them.

Avionics are delicate and may fail for a number of reasons. Roll for failure when any of the following situations arise:

1. The ship receives a radiation damage result from the combat tables which need not actually cause damage, or is subject to a heavy dose of radiation from any other source.

2. Emerging from jump. Electromagnetic disturbances which will result on emerging from E-space, can cause a unit to fail.

3. The set is shot at, heavily jarred or strained/overheated.

There are several other basic reasons for failure and these should be adjudicated by the referee as and when they arise.

Roll for Failure

Basic roll is 12+ on two dice. DMs:
+1 per previous repair done by crew on that set.
+1 per point of radiation damage in combat.
+1 per ten points of damage if shot at etc. (Cumulative, roll each time hit.)

If this roll is successful, proceed to the *Failure* table. A natural roll of two causes a problem which is due to calibration and may not be fixed by the player. Likewise a 12 result is also unrepairable.

By Imperial regulations, a ship not possessing a Basic Sensor Package (BSP) of some description is not fit to fly, and it will have its 'Fitness To Fly' papers withdrawn until such time as the unit is repaired or replaced. The fine for flying without a BSP is Cr1d×10,000 and possible confiscation of ship if lack of such a unit led to a dangerous situation.

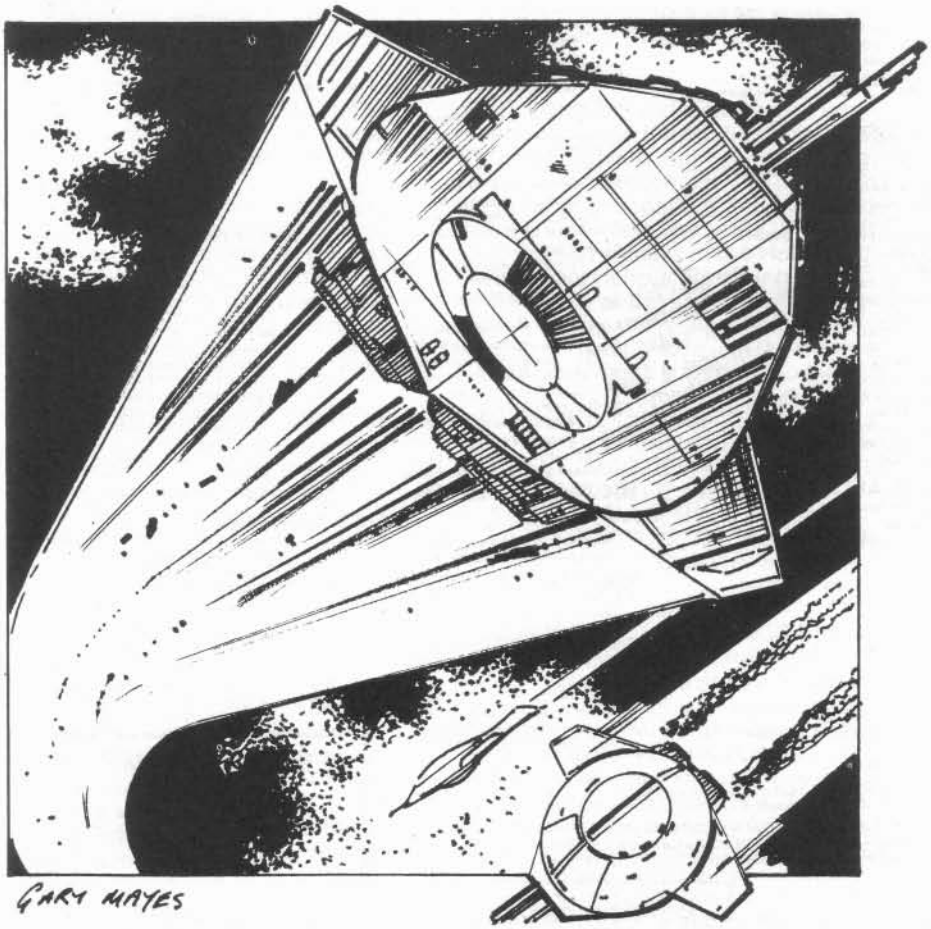
FAILURE TABLE (Roll 2d)

Result	Problem	Cost to Fix (Cr)	Roll to Fix
2	No major problem – bad resolution	1d×100	–
3	Occasional conflicting information	1d×500	8+
4-5	Aerial problem – no signal	1d×1000	8+
6-7	Range reduction	1d×5000	9+
8-9	Erratic signal – display flickers	1d×1000	8+
10	Reduced effectiveness (eg ECM)	1d×1500	9+
11	False information	1d×10% cost	10+
12	Complete failure	2d×10% cost	–

The 'roll to fix' has the following DMs: +1 per Electronic skill level *or* +1 per Mechanical skill level if the problem is with the aerial. If fixed by starport maintenance personnel the time required, including testing and calibration, is 1-3 days, and all accumulated pluses so far are halved. If the set is fixed by a crew member, then for each time it subsequently fails add the number to the result roll, for example, for two previous repairs by crew members, add +2 to the 'roll to fix'. The DM for reliability should be recorded by the referee from game to game for future avionics failures.

In order to compute the cost of the repairs due to 'false information' or 'complete failure', the Basic Sensor Package, with which all ships are initially fitted, is assumed to cost MCr0.25 per 100 tons of the ship. This cost is figured into the cost of the bridge in the design stage.

The 'cost to fix' only applies when someone is called in to repair the set, such as the starport maintenance division. The 'roll to fix' applies when players are attempting to fix a failure themselves. On the 'roll to fix', the player must have some experience in the relevant area in order to try (Electronics-1 is usually sufficient). □



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The *Hanna-Barbara 'Size of a Hound-Dog' Pet Shop*. Searching for a companion for *Felix*.

Animal encounter: Carnivore, 200kg, 21/12 hits. Wounds: 17. A1 F9 S1. For *Gavin*. Port authorities return the crew to their ship in case of any more *'one in a million'* chances . . .

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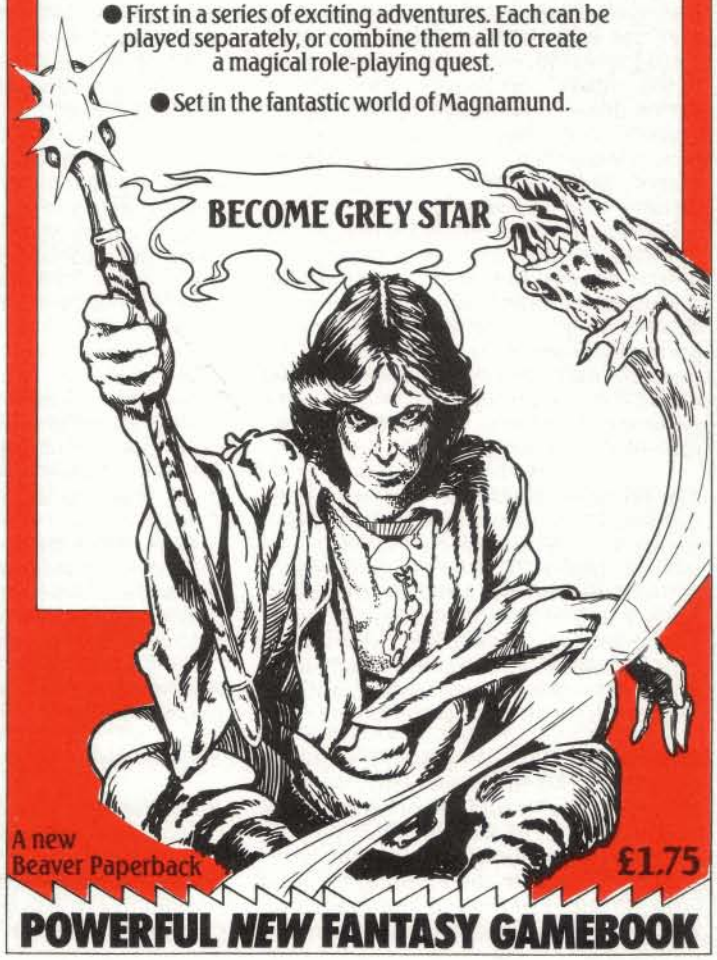

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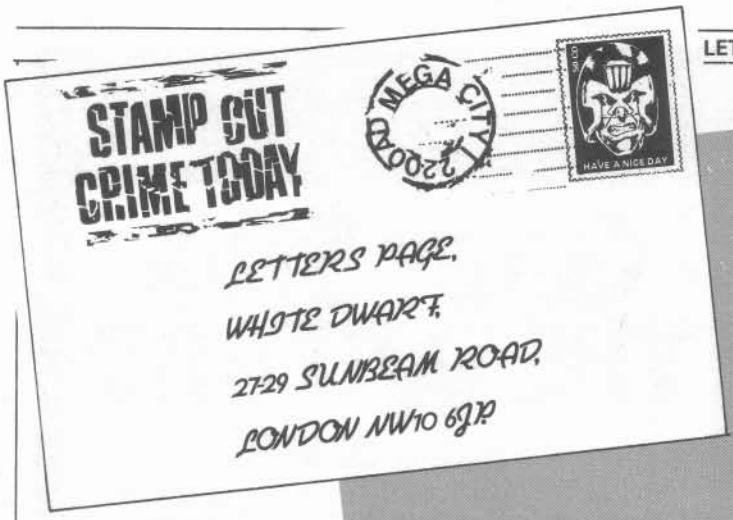


George Stepanek's letter in WD69 brought in a considerable amount of correspondence, much along the lines of . . .

Holy macaroni! Who does this bozo, George Stepanek, think he is? . . .
I was enraged . . .
I was angered . . .
I was left foaming at the mouth . . .

Rabid readers aside, most settled into a concerted attack on his views.

James O'Shea, London: I do not know which annoys me more; George Stepanek's quite unwarranted attack on younger devotees of role-playing or his claim to speak on behalf of all older gamers.

At twenty-one, I hardly count myself as having one foot in the grave, but I do have seven years or so of playing and DMing experience behind me, so I believe that I fall within the category of an older gamer, and I for one have no objection to the presence of younger gamers within our hobby. It is certainly true that there is now a great deal of material aimed towards the younger end of the market, but if you don't like it, you don't have to read it, Charlie.

Perhaps the most annoying thing about the letter is its air of undisguised unfriendliness. One of the most pleasant things about shopping in a games shop or attending a convention is the air of goodwill which is always present. The nasty attitude of people like Mr Stepanek does far more damage than the innocent pleasure afforded to youngsters by the juvenilia currently produced.

Jim Williams, Swindon: Perhaps he (George Stepanek) feels that the RPG hobby should be restricted to people over the age of 25. Is he so completely bigoted that he can't see this will reduce the number of people playing RPGs? That if we can get children involved, not only will we ensure that the hobby lasts beyond the present generation, but prices will (or should) come down.

Christopher Blunt, Brighton: It seems to me that it is Mr Stepanek who needs to grow up. Why shouldn't younger people (or children, as he so patronisingly puts it) enjoy role-playing games? I began playing RPGs with the *Fighting Fantasy* book, *Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, and although I feel it is not suitable for multi-player scenarios, it is possible to gain experience using *FF*.

Mark Winder, Gillingham: How utterly selfish and stuck-up can you get? If Mr Stepanek was a true RPG fan, surely he should try to introduce new players to the intellectual delights of fantasy and SF games, instead of turning RPGers into a dying race. Without younger players, there would be no hope for the game.

Richard Baber, Llwynypia: Mr Stepanek obviously does not understand that the difference between a young, inexperienced role-player and an older, experienced role-player is the actual playing experience.

Jez Keen, Stockport: George has put forward the proposal that young children should not be allowed to play role-playing games. An intolerant attitude, but one which he defends with apparent reason. Not so.

What George fails to realise is that if manufacturers weren't flooding the market with 'childish' games at rip-off prices, the games companies would collapse, and there would be no hobby. People have to earn a living somehow, and if playing *FF* gamebooks keeps people happy, then why the hell shouldn't people do it? I'd have thought that George, of all people, would recognise the freedom of the individual, being as he is of Czech origin.

If younger gamers were not to play, I wonder where the older gamers would come from? Would there be some age limit at which children come of age and are allowed to play games such as *D&D*? And would their play not be similar to that if they had begun playing four years earlier?

There would be no industry without the 'younger gamers', and I'm all for them. Show them the full potential of role-playing games, but don't baffle them, else they won't bother.

Andrew Hill, Farnham: Up bitchy letters page debates!

Yes, up them. –Ed.

Some readers, however, found that they could agree with George . . .

Robert Paterson, Perth, Western Australia: I would like to add my voice to that of George Stepanek in *White Dwarf 69*. Dave Langford is great. He is the first thing I read after the editorial.

I saw something the other day that I am not sure he is aware of. On the cover of the paperback copy of *Battlefield Earth*, I saw a sticker that said 'National No1 Best Seller. Soon to be *two* major movies'. And with the movies come the *Battlefield Earth* role-playing game, bike, straight jackets . . .

And talking of Battlefield Earth . . .

Russell Massey, Normanton: I am writing to take exception to Marcus Rowland's review of *Twilight 2000*. It is my opinion that a reviewer should confine himself to criticism of a game's production values, systems and playability and should not, as Marcus did, spend two-thirds of the review in disagreeing with the basic premise of the game.

The fact that the game does not show the most horrific consequences of nuclear war is neither here nor there. It is set after 5 years of world war, during which a relatively mild nuclear exchange took place. That is the game scenario, just as *Traveller* is set in a human dominated and feudalistic interstellar society, or *D&D* is often set in states controlled by evil beings holding entire populations in thrall. The setting has no bearing on the quality of the game itself, which should not be denigrated because the reviewer does not agree with its moral stance and attitudes.

Tom Conway, Musselburgh: Congrats to Marcus L Rowland for sticking the boot in the Americanised 'Battlefield Europe' views of *Twilight 2000* – it was was asking for it!

Graham Morton, Halesowen: Has the EGG finally cracked? What possible justification has *TSR* got to shut down *Imagine* – and in the way that they did? I think Mr Gygax should check on the rules for multi-classed characters – he is behaving like a barbarian™ with a cavalier™ attitude.

The only reason I can figure out for the decision to close *Imagine* now is the circulation war – it always takes the Americans over two years to realise there is any sort of war in Europe.

Dave Morris, Woking: The *Dwarf* seems to be toughening up its content, and the latest issue was good enough to make me forget for a while the sad demise of *Imagine*, hurled into the Stygian pit by the blind amorphous god-entities of Lake Geneva.

Alun Preece, Cardiff: Pete Tamlyn's *Rationale Behaviour* (*WD69*) made a number of worthwhile comments. Having GMed Traveller with a group of students for some time, I am well aware of the pitfalls when an adventure overlaps the specialist fields of any of my players! I don't really think it matters too much that the referee isn't a walking science encyclopaedia, providing he stays in control of the game-universe. The players like showing off their skills, as well as their characters' skills, and sometimes the experience can be educational as well as enjoyable. As Mike Lewis said (*WD65*), it's all a question of balance.

Dave Morris: I enjoyed Pete Tamlyn's article (maybe because I enjoy anything to do with clever new rules systems), but the GM in me is asking whether this Campaign Rating stuff is worth the bother. Isn't it the kind of thing Mike Lewis was talking about? Obviously a game needs rules for combat, magic and a few other features – but not for controlling campaign structure or role-playing, surely? My own campaign has managed for some years to feed the players' actions 'back into the system' – what else do all the NPCs, politics, temples, etc, function for? So many unique situations have cropped up that I prefer to adjudicate, say, a temple's attitude to a character personally. If I fed all the numbers into a Campaign Ratings system and waited for it to tell me what to do then I may as well GM by computer (and I'd change all the Ratings parameters anyway, whenever it gave me a result I disagreed with).

Francis Gallop and Chris Bowden, Bristol: Pete Tamlyn's suggestions that game systems are incomplete without rules for PC/NPC interaction were little short of ludicrous. We have always understood that the whole point of any RPG was to encourage role-playing, something that can only be successfully accomplished without the aid of rules explaining how to execute this task, which must come from the player's mind and not from some sheet giving step by step instructions. It is this 'nit-picking' attitude that seems to be turning new players into rule-bashers instead of role-players.

Alex McDonald, Edinburgh: I was interested to see Peter Blanchard's piece on underwater adventuring, since I have been investigating diving myself, though for a different time period. I was, however, surprised to read the claim that external pressure will fracture a diving bell. Since a diving bell works because the presssure of the water round the bell is equal to the pressure of the air inside, the bell is unlikely to break due to water pressure. By the way, a diving bell of the type mentioned has a practical operating depth of 66 feet, at which depth the bell would be three-quarters filled with water. The main problem with descending much below this depth in a bell is termed, by the layman, 'drowning'.

Oliver MacDonald, Harpenden: I feel I must point out some errors in Peter Blanchard's article on undersea adventurers (*WD68*). Chiefly, his statements that there are more ocean lifeforms than freshwater ones and that the human eye is more sensitive to the red end of the spectrum are both untrue.

Due to its wider range of habitats and the isolation of communities, freshwater supports far more species than does sea water. As far as the human eye is concerned, although it is certainly more sensitive to red light than most other species, it is most sensitive to those wavelengths in the middle of the visual spectrum, ie green/yellow.

Other minor errors include the 'numerous' problems to living at great depth. If you are born there and adapted to the pressure, there is only one real problem; lack of food. In places where food is abundant, as round deep ocean volcanic sulphur vents, life is similarly abundant.

These may seem like nit-picks, but considering the age of many of your readers and the distressing tendency for people to accept anything in print as gospel, I believe they should be pointed out.

Dave Morris: After my snide remark about the value-for-money of *RQ3* in *RuneRites*, let me know if there are any indignant rejoinders!

Your wish is my command . . . –Ed.

Rick Crofts, East Grinstead: If you have read *RQ3*, which I doubt, since *WD* probably doesn't pay any of the staff enough money to be able to afford it, then you would know that this topic is covered on page 57-58. Mr Marsh's article adds little or anything to the *RQ3* rules section and uses 2 or 3 times the space. However, the article is good for people who haven't yet been granted the loan from the bank to buy *RQ3* (and who own *RQ2*).

It was intended as an addition to the RQ2 *rules system, as all* RuneRites *articles are at present. The widespread acceptance of* RQ3 *has yet to be proven and* RuneRites *is structured accordingly. –Ed.*

Paul Weatherly, Ramsgate: I was surprised to see a highly sensible *RuneRites* column in *WD69*. The injustice of the Strike Rank system must have annoyed many a competent dagger-wielding thief. Anyone who has read a decent fantasy novel will have noticed that spears are used in particular situations by the heroes to great effect, but when was the last time the Gray Mouser snuck down a narrow passage with a long spear at the ready. The weight of a printed column behind me should help others to adopt at least a similar method. The Black Shadow (greatest warrior-thief in Glorantha) extends his thanks.

Gary Billen, Weymouth: It seems the main idea behind the *RuneRites* article was that Mr Marsh would like wolves and their ilk to be more powerful than a starting PC; this is, of course, a blasphemy of the highest order against role-playing. It is well known that role-playing was designed to allow its players to create their own adventure book heroes, and as far as I know, no author would have his heroes killed off by a pack of wolves in chapter 1.

Personally, I would like to see wolves and similar creatures seem more powerful than the average novice adventurer, otherwise the game loses much of its impact. I enjoy using wolves to instil fear in the hearts of noble adventurers and help create a consistent games atmosphere; some 'heroes' are little more than heavily armed peasants and should expect to have some difficulties with such beasts. Philosophies differ from game to game – MERP *wolves are positively terrifying! –Ed.*

Simon and Edwin Sheaf, Hove: Shock! Horror! It can't be true. There we were flicking through the pages of the latest issue of your illustrious publication when we reached *Fiend Factory*, that bastion of wonderful *AD&D* blade fodder much loved by your readers (except for players of such 'minority' games as *Traveller, RuneQuest, Golden Heroes* and *Call of Cthulhu*). And what do we find? *Golden Heroes* characters!! Is nothing sacred? What will poor DMs do now with only a measly three books of monsters? Oh dear, oh dear, I can see them rushing to their newsagents cancelling all their subscriptions. Still, it was a welcome change for all us lesser mortals – two whole pages devoted to a minority game – even if *GH* PCs are a strange subject for a *Fiend Factory*.

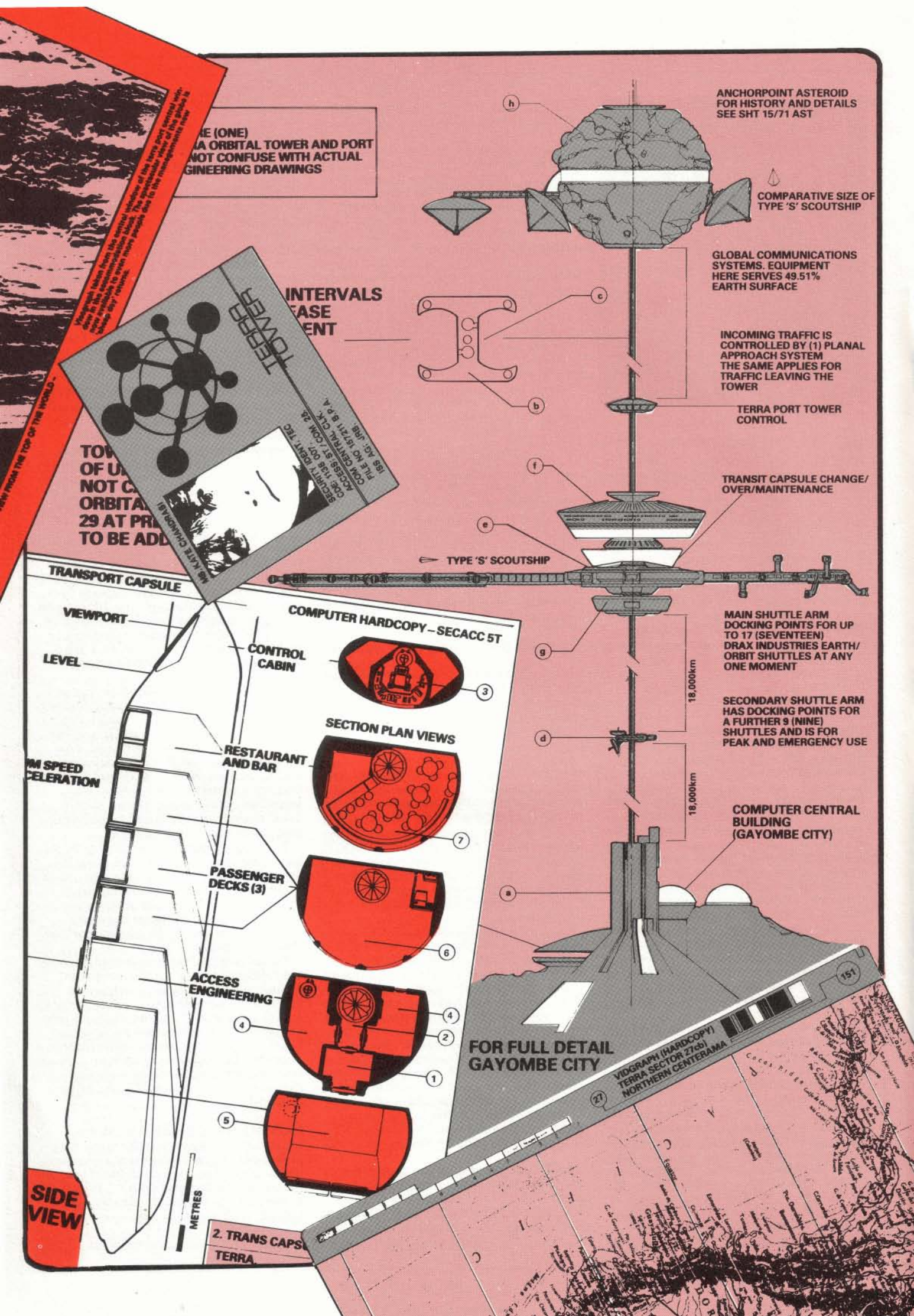
Martin Pay, Westgate-On-Sea: It was with some annoyance that I read Martyn Plummer's letter in *WD68* which indirectly attacks Superhero RPGs and the comics on which they are based. To attempt to dismiss them by claiming that Superhero RPG rules do not need to be totally consistent since they are based on comic strips 'aimed at children' shows what little and biased information he has on the subject.

For many years now, *Marvel* comics have had stories aimed at all possible ages of readers, and they must be proud of the continuity retained throughout all their comics as the plots progress. Social and political issues regularly enter into the stories to add interest for the adult reader.

As for any of the commercially available rules not being 'totally consistent', I found myself mildly amused by the comment. Consistent with what, I might ask? Superhero RPGs are based in a real life world, so the inherent background for all plots is near reality. How Martyn Plummer can use in comparison a dead orc brought back to life by a necromancer as being more realistic, I find astounding.

Michael Lorenz, Bristol: I think that important bits of each letter should be picked out, so more different views and ideas can be heard or said. But if you dare chop up this one with a 2-handed battle axe, I will send my deadly 300hp solicitors after you.

Looks like I'm going to be solicited . . . –Ed.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TOWER TROUBLE

A Traveller Adventure for 3-6 Characters
by Marcus L Rowland

Referee Only
Module 1: Introduction
This is a *Traveller* scenario for 3-6 criminal characters, statistics for which appear in Module 3. Referees will need *Traveller Books 1-4* or *Starter Traveller* and *Book 4, Supplement 1, 1001 Characters* and *Supplement 4, Citizens of the Imperium. Adventure 8, Prison Planet,* may also be useful.

Players
Module 2: Introduction
It's been a few months since the last big score, and your money is getting low. There are only two alternatives: (1) find an honest job, or (2) find a dishonest job. Of the two, the latter seems more suited to your talents and experience. As luck would have it, such a job seems to be available.

You all know of Leon Arkoff, an independent criminal active in and around the Sol Subsector. He's an ingenious planner, though not a man of action, who prefers to recruit teams of criminals to carry out his projects. Most of his operations are risky but profitable, and he's never been arrested.

Each of you has been contacted through underworld sources, and given a non-transferable Middle Passage to Terra, if you don't already live there. You are asked to meet in the lounge of the Copernicus Plaza Hotel, on Luna, a few days after your arrival.

Referee Only
Module 3: The Heavy Racket
Violent crime in the Imperium is not necessarily the province of an easily-defined criminal subclass. While some individuals devote their whole lives to crime, others drift into it through laziness, greed, or desperation. Criminal argot for professional armed robbery is 'the heavy racket'.

The characters below may be used by the players or as NPCs. The descriptions include one unusual statistic, Rep, which is reputation amongst criminals, as used in *Traveller Adventure 8.* There should be six characters; one of whom should own a starship. Italicised data is reserved for players running characters. Information in inverted commas will be revealed when Arkoff introduces characters:

Achmed Smith, Terra (Australia)/Sol, 77A995, Rogue, Rep 10, Age 47, 7 terms. Cr2,500, Blade, Forgery kit (TL12), Jack. Streetwise-3, Computer-2, Forgery-2, Gambling-1, Blade-0, Vacc-0.

Smith is a con-man and forger, specialising in computer crime and business frauds. He has numerous black market contacts on the American continent.

'This is Achmed Smith. He's one of the boys who sold the World Trade Centre to the Vegan Ambassador. Achmed, you'll be buying supplies for this job, and helping with the hit.'

Wade Harper, Terra (Belt)/Sol, 777887, Belter, Rep 5, Age 34, 4 terms. Cr22,000, Body pistol, Jack, Seeker. Pilot-2, Gun Cbt-1, Vacc-1, Navigator-1.

Harper engages in smuggling or crime whenever mining is poor. His ship is fitted with a beam laser and sandcaster, and concealed ECM and radar jamming equipment (TL 11). The ship has false registration papers and insignia, and a second transponder modified to give a fake ID signal.

'This is Wade Harper. Wade'll be in charge of the getaway.'

Joan Walker, Terra (LA)/SOL, A99976, Ex-Marine Sergeant, Rep 10, Age 33, 3 terms. Cr4,750, Snub pistol. Cloth, 2 high psg. ACR-2, Brawling-2, Demolitions-2, Air/Raft-1, Battle Dress-1, Blade-1, Tactics-1, Snub Pistol-1.

Since leaving the service Walker has discovered that crime pays better than mercenary work. She has been involved in armed rob-

beries and contract killings.

'Meet Joan Walker. She did demolition work for the Titan Databank heist, and rubbed out the squealer afterwards. Joan, I'm sure we'll need your talents.'

Piet Bolinski, Terra (Britcit)/Sol, B9A443, Other, Rep 10, Age 48, 7 terms. Cr350, Switchblade (as dagger), Jack. Brawling-3, Dagger-2, Revolver-2, Ground Car-1.

Bolinski is a reliable, unimaginative and exceptionally ugly thug.

'This is Piet Bolinski. Piet, we're sure to need muscle on this one.'

Obelia Malmsey, Ember/Sol, 956D87, Ex-Navy Captain, Rep 5, Age 48, 7 terms. Cr3,400, Revolver, Hand computer, Jack. Electronics-3, Pilot-2, Navigation-2, Computer-2, Gunnery-2, Vacc-1, Revolver-0, Rapier-0.

Obelia was court-martialled after a black market racket she organised was betrayed by a police informer. Her lawyer secured an acquittal, but took all her money. She wants to steal enough money to buy a Far Trader. She is suspicious of anyone she doesn't know.

'Meet Obelia Malmsey, who's a newcomer to this racket but already has a pretty good track record. Obelia, I think we'll run into alarms on this job. You're the best person to handle them.'

Patti Jordani, Terra (Luna)/Sol, 7CC777, Rogue, Rep 5, Age 23, 1 term. Cr2,100, Dagger, Lockpicks, Unarmoured. Jack-O-T-3, Streetwise-2, Brawling-0, Dagger-0, Vacc-0.

Patti is a well-concealed trained psionic, strength 7, with the following powers: Clairvoyance 3, Awareness 4, Special; Luck (this power is controlled by the referee). She is a burglar and pickpocket, and has participated in various confidence rackets, but has no criminal record.

[Referee: The 'Luck' power gives a beneficial 1d6-1 modifier on all rolls to hit, saving throws, etc, and a 1d6-1 negative modifier on rolls to hit Patti.]

'And this is Patti Jordani. Patti, I've heard that you're a born improviser. That's a skill we may need on this job.'

Players
Module 4a: The Terra System
Terra/Sol
Primary: Sol G2 V
Orbit 3: Terra A867A69 F B
Moon: Luna F20076C F N Research Lab. Colony
Orbit 5: Belt F00066B E Colony

IISS Survey Update 1105.231, Terra System – Extract

'. . . The Terra system is occupied territory, garrisoned by Imperial forces. All starships entering the system must dock at Terra orbital spaceport for inspection and customs checks. There are three important inhabited areas plus several minor colonies.

'Terra itself is the third planet of Sol, and is the birthplace of the Solomani race. Some experts believe that it is also the birthplace of all Humaniti, and the ancestral home of the Vargr. There are 11.6 billion inhabitants, the majority concentrated in great urban conglomerations (megacities) and arcologies.

'Luna, Terra's moon, is one of the most densely populated moons in the Imperium, a long-established colony with 8.65 million inhabitants.

'The Terra Belt is an important mineral source, colonised and supporting 4.5 million inhabitants.

'Because the system holds so many colonised areas, and because Earth has many habitable zones, most Terran personnel records include a note of birthplace within the system, as well as the normal Planet/Subsector record.

'The system holds many impressive feats of pre-starflight engineering, including N'York, LA, and Britcit megacities, the enigmatic pyramids, and the amazing Orbital Tower, which is an awesome monument to technological obsolescence . . .'

– From *Terra on Fifty Credits a Day*, Spool 1

Referee Only
Module 4b: The Terra System
The Terra system is garrisoned by Imperial forces who are prepared for terrorist raids. Incoming passengers are subject to careful searches, and will be arrested and questioned if they try to smuggle weapons or suspicious materials.

A roll of 10+ (+ Streetwise, −1 per kg smuggled) is needed to get through Terran customs with any illegal equipment, regardless of concealment methods. Bribes will not be accepted, since all officers are continually monitored. Arkoff has police contacts who will warn him if anyone is arrested. He will then contact characters who have entered successfully and set a new rendezvous in another hotel, a day earlier than planned. He will make no attempt to rescue captured characters, who will eventually be interrogated (using advanced and virtually infallible electrohypnotic techniques), convicted of any previous crimes, and sentenced to appropriate imprisonment on a penal planet (see *Traveller Adventure 8*). Arkoff is already a wanted criminal, and isn't worried about the police learning that he is planning another operation. Once the team know the details of his plan he will be prepared to abandon it (and the team) without hesitation, if anyone is arrested.

Arkoff will not appear in person until the day of the meeting. He is a portly bearded man, with instantly forgettable features:

'Leon Arkoff', Capitol, 677BA9, Ex-Bureaucrat, Rep 30, Age 59, 9 terms.
Cr271,500, Body Pistol, Mesh, Travellers.
Admin-3, Computer-2, Leader-2, Recruiting-1, Pistol-1.

'Arkoff' is actually Benjamin B'haal, a retired SuSag executive. He found his pension inadequate, and turned to crime as an additional source of revenue. He has a good disguise kit (concealed in another suite) and only puts on his 'Arkoff' appearance for meetings with criminals. He is wanted by the police as Arkoff. B'haal is a good actor, and characters will think that he is a native Terran.

On arriving in the lounge he will approach all the player characters (and any NPCs), telling them to come to suite 1105 at 18.00 hours.

When everyone has arrived Arkoff will turn switches on a communicator unit (actually a bug jammer) then introduce those present, mentioning names and vague personal details. Once introductions are complete Arkoff will explain his plan, using a chart (*Fig 1*) as a visual aid. After the meeting Arkoff will see the team out, clear up, spray all rooms with solvent which removes fingerprints, and leave by another exit.

Referee Only
Module 5: The Terra Tower
Terra is one of the few worlds with an Orbital Tower, a rigid structure running from the equator to a synchronous orbit and on out to a counterweight 100,000km from the equator. Towers are a cheap way to move loads to and from orbit, but their construction is extremely expensive, and uneconomical if grav units are available. The Terra Tower was built after the discovery of fusion, and was nearly complete when the gravity nullifier was invented. The government decided to finish construction, and ultimately the orbital section of Terra starport was built around the Tower. Starships landing on Terra pay a Cr8,000 surcharge, above normal landing fees. This fee isn't charged at the orbital port, and is an inducement to use the Tower.

The base of the Tower [**a**], on a mountain in Ecuador, is a big transit terminus, with monorail lines, air/raft parks, and hotels. It has some Extrality privileges, such as the availability of duty-free goods, but is still subject to Terran law. The complex has its own police, and there is a Marine base nearby.

The Tower [**b**] is made of monomolecular cable filaments embedded in foamed plasteel, and carries two magnetic induction tracks [**c**] resembling vertical monorails. The run from the ground station to Terra port takes six hours. Halfway to the port is a communications relay platform [**d**].

Terra port is in a geosynchronous orbit 36,000km above Ecuador. The section attached to the Tower is just a small part of the complex, which has several independent orbital facilities. This section has three main levels; [**e**] Docks, [**f**] Accommodation and administration, [**g**] Engineering, communications, and Tower travel terminus. The port has its own Marine garrison, as well as a private security force.

From the port the Tower runs up another 64,000km, to a small astercid [**h**] which is pulled outwards by centrifugal force, keeping the Tower rigid. It carries communications relay equipment serving the entire visible hemisphere, with a small crew of engineers.

At irregular intervals the Navy base on Terra ships components to the dockyards at Terra Orbital Port. They range from electronics modules and computer CPUs to laser exciiors and other weapon assemblies. The value of shipments varies between 4 and 8.5 Megacredits.

The shipments are escorted to the Tower base by a platoon of Marines with a G-Carrier escort, and another unit takes over at Terra port. In the capsule, though, there can only be room for a few guards.

Arkoff intends to find out when the next shipment is due then take over the 18,000km relay station, stop the capsule, and capture the components. Many problems must be solved to make this possible, but Arkoff thinks that the team he has recruited can succeed. While most of the shipment will probably be military components, unusable by civilian customers, Arkoff has underworld contacts who can find suitable markets. They will demand a 40% fee; Arkoff wants a 30% share of the remainder but will finance the robbery. The team (including NPCs) can expect to share up to 3.6 Megacredits if the robbery is successful.

Arkoff can be bargained down to a minimum 25% share, but the 40% marketing fee is fixed. Once negotiations are complete Arkoff will suggest that the team separate, take local shuttle flights from Luna to the Tower, then travel down the Tower and stay in ground terminus hotels while gathering information and finalising plans. He has already booked a suite in one of the hotels, which the team can use as headquarters. He wants to meet there the next day at 11.00 hours, and explain more about the plan.

The Luna to Tower run is a commuter service which isn't subject to full customs control. Passengers must show papers when buying tickets, but a strict scrutiny will only occur on a roll of (SOC + 3) or more. Arkoff will use his real name and papers, other characters must make whatever arrangements they prefer. The shuttle run lasts three hours, the ride down the Tower another six.

Players
Module 6a: Tower Shuttle Capsules
The Tower shuttle system is essentially a vertical monorail. Each car is fitted with its own drive units, life support, grav system, and compensators. The capsules have seven decks (*Fig 2*), with entry on the lowest passenger level.

1. Airlock.
2. Foyer and spiral staircase to upper decks.
3. Control room.
4. Engineering compartment.
5. Cargo compartment, accessible from **4** or via an external hatch.
6. Three identical decks, each seating 16 passengers. Each seat has a clear outside view through photochromic ports, and is equipped with its own video, music, and comm facilities.
7. Restaurant and bar.

The capsule has a crew of 2; the operator and a steward.

Referee Only
Module 6b: Tower Shuttle Capsules
All capsules are in continuous contact with the ground terminus computer, which notes speed changes. The operator has a comm link to the terminus, transmitting through the superconductor cables of the Tower. These communications links will not be affected by normal jamming. Automatic hatches between the decks of the capsules are designed to slam close if there is a significant drop in air pressure. They can be opened manually in d6+2 rounds. The engineering deck is the only accessible area when the capsule is docked at the 18,000km station. The hold protrudes below the station hull, the upper decks protrude above it. Stewards on these shuttles have Brawling-2 and Medical-1, operators have Engineer-2 or 3 and Electronics-1 or 2. The operator has an emergency vacc suit, the steward has a five-minute emergency air mask.

Players
Module 7a: Phase 1 – The Data Heist
Arkoff needs several items of information, including the exact date and time of the next shipment, station plans, and details of the operation and maintenance of the Tower. He wants the team to find out as much as possible about these topics by making friends with Tower employees, by observation, or even by taking jobs on the Tower staff.

Arkoff believes that the Navy must notify Tower control several days before a shipment, to allow rescheduling of traffic. He wants the team to penetrate the ground terminus computer centre and plant a 'tapeworm', a specialised program which will nullify the normal security procedures in the computer and allow Arkoff to interrogate it through normal comm links. The computer centre probably has extremely tight security, so careful preparation is essential. Arkoff has already discovered that the centre is somewhere off West Sector Plaza, a public precinct on one of the lower levels of the ground terminus. He hasn't been able to uncover any additional information.

At this stage, and throughout the operation, Arkoff will provide funds (within reasonable limits) to buy any special equipment the team may need.

If the team is caught the whole plan must be abandoned. The Navy would probably use an alternative route or start to fit the components at their ground base. Extreme caution and complete secrecy are essential.

Referee Only
Module 7b: Phase 1 – The Data Heist
Arkoff has budgeted Cr35,000 for equipment. The referee should use the normal rules on the use of Streetwise skill, Carousing, Forgery, etc, to determine the results of contacts with the black market and other illicit activities. Some items, such as battle dress and energy weapons, are unavailable on the black market. Most other items are available but delivery time will be 1d6 days.

When all is ready the team will probably want to penetrate the computer centre, or bribe someone who works there to plant the program. If the latter choice is made the person selected will appear to accept the bribe and take the program, but will actually report to his superiors as soon as he enters the complex. There is a standing Cr25,000 reward for the discovery of such breaches of Tower control security.

The computer complex is on the lowest level of the terminus, on a side corridor off a public pedestrian precinct (*Fig 3*). The complex has reinforced walls equivalent to starship bulkheads. The most important areas (the control room and memory banks) are buried in several metres of concrete and shielding.

1. Locked door marked 'Employees Only'. Openable by lock-picking (Roll 8+, +Mechanical, +JOT), or by the use of a standard passkey which is issued to all employees.

2. Iris valve, monitored by a video camera, fitted with a security card lock. A special security pass with a holograph picture and magnetic coding must be used to open this valve. Passes are issued to programmers, technicians, and engineers assigned to the complex, and to clerks who work in the outer offices. The valve locks can be picked on a roll of 10+, but anyone picking them would be seen through the camera.

Characters must copy a genuine pass to enter. While a pass might be stolen by mugging someone, any report that one is missing will cause a full-scale security alert, with everyone entering the complex being identified by fingerprints and retinal patterns. New passes will be issued after 4d6 hours, and anyone trying to use the old type will be held for questioning.

3. Guard room. Guards are typical police, wear mesh armour, and carry snub pistols with AP ammunition. The guard inspects passes before letting anyone enter, and makes a quick search for weapons. He won't react to legitimate equipment. A guard in room **5** monitors this room through a video camera. When the guard in **3** is satisfied he will press a concealed button, opening a valve to room **4**.

4. Airlock fitted with explosive sniffers. If explosives are detected the room floods with tranquilliser gas, which will leave characters unconscious for 16-END hours. Either guard can activate the sprays.

5. Guard room. Another guard inspects security passes and issues colour-coded badges, appropriate to the rank shown. Red badges (clerks, most guards, some technicians) allow entry to rooms **6-10**. Silver badge wearers (programmers, operators, engineers, guards, and some technicians) can also enter the main computer room (**11**). Gold badge wearers (the senior programmer, the chief engineer, and two technicians) can enter another chamber holding the CPU and store (**14**). Everyone in the complex knows gold badge wearers by sight, and will react to imposters. The guards are on a strict schedule, and know each other by sight. The badges contain ID circuitry, and anyone trying to enter an unauthorised area will set off alarms.

6a, 6b, 6c. Clerical offices, containing computer terminals and files. The terminals are model 1 computers, linked to the main computer. These offices are manned by day, empty by night. The terminals are switched off and locked at night. Roll 5+ to pick the locks, 4+ (+ Computer) to reactivate terminals without an alarm. These terminals can access the main system, but a roll of 10+ (+ Computer) is needed to load the tapeworm program into the master computer, or to obtain any information from it. On a roll of 4- alarms will activate. The filing cabinets are locked and hold nothing significant. All office terminals have printers.

7. Maintenance office, manned at all times. This office holds plans of the Tower, engineering schedules and other useful information. Silver badge wearers have unrestricted access to these documents.

8. Automated canteen. Personnel must not smoke, eat, or drink outside this room, since ash, crumbs and liquids could seriously damage terminals. Anyone breaking this rule will be stopped and questioned. The room holds 0-3 genuine personnel at any time.

9. Washroom.

10. Store room (Stationery etc).

11. Programming centre. The room is domed, with a 6-metre ceiling. The focus of the chamber is a huge cylindrical hologram tank, surrounded by computer terminals. This tank can be used to show computer projections of any part of the Tower, in microscopical detail. It normally shows an overall view of the Tower.

The main computer is a modified type 7 unit with extra storage capacity, running every aspect of Tower operations. There are d6+1 operators in the room, who normally use the terminals around the tank. There is another terminal (**12**) to one side, fitted with a printer and facsimile equipment. Terminals are always live, but a roll of 4+ (+ Computer) is needed to log on to the system without setting off alarms. Roll 7+ to load the tapeworm program, on 4– a failure will sound alarms. More information can be extracted on 6+, without any risk of sounding alarms. It takes two minutes to make each attempt, plus another 1-2 minutes if a printout or diagram is required. Data available includes the following:

Plan of Tower (*Figure 1*)
Plan of Tower monorail car (*Figure 2*)
Plan of computer centre (*Figure 3*)
Plan of midpoint relay station (*Figure 4*)
Maintenance schedule for next 12 days

A senior security guard is stationed at a desk (**13**), but most of his attention is focused on a bank of video monitors. On a roll of 10+ (roll every 5 minutes characters are in room **11**), he will get up and look around the room, and any suspicious actions may attract his attention. Another guard stands outside a lock leading to chamber **14**.

14. CPU and store. These units are a series of grey armoured plastalloy boxes, containing blocks of cryogenically-cooled superconducting circuitry, and are useless to adventurers. Any attempt to enter this room will lead to detection and the failure of the plan.

Leaving the complex is much simpler than entering. Characters need only walk out, returning badges to the guard in room 5 as they leave. If this step is omitted, roll for the guards reaction. On 11+ he will activate the gas sprays when the intruders are in room **4**, otherwise he will simply ask characters to return the badges.

Referee Only
Module 8: Phase 2: Plans
The tapeworm program will let Arkoff break into the computer 2d6+1 times before it is detected. The next shipment will be on Thursday (an obsolete date system still used on Terra), the week after the tapeworm is planted.

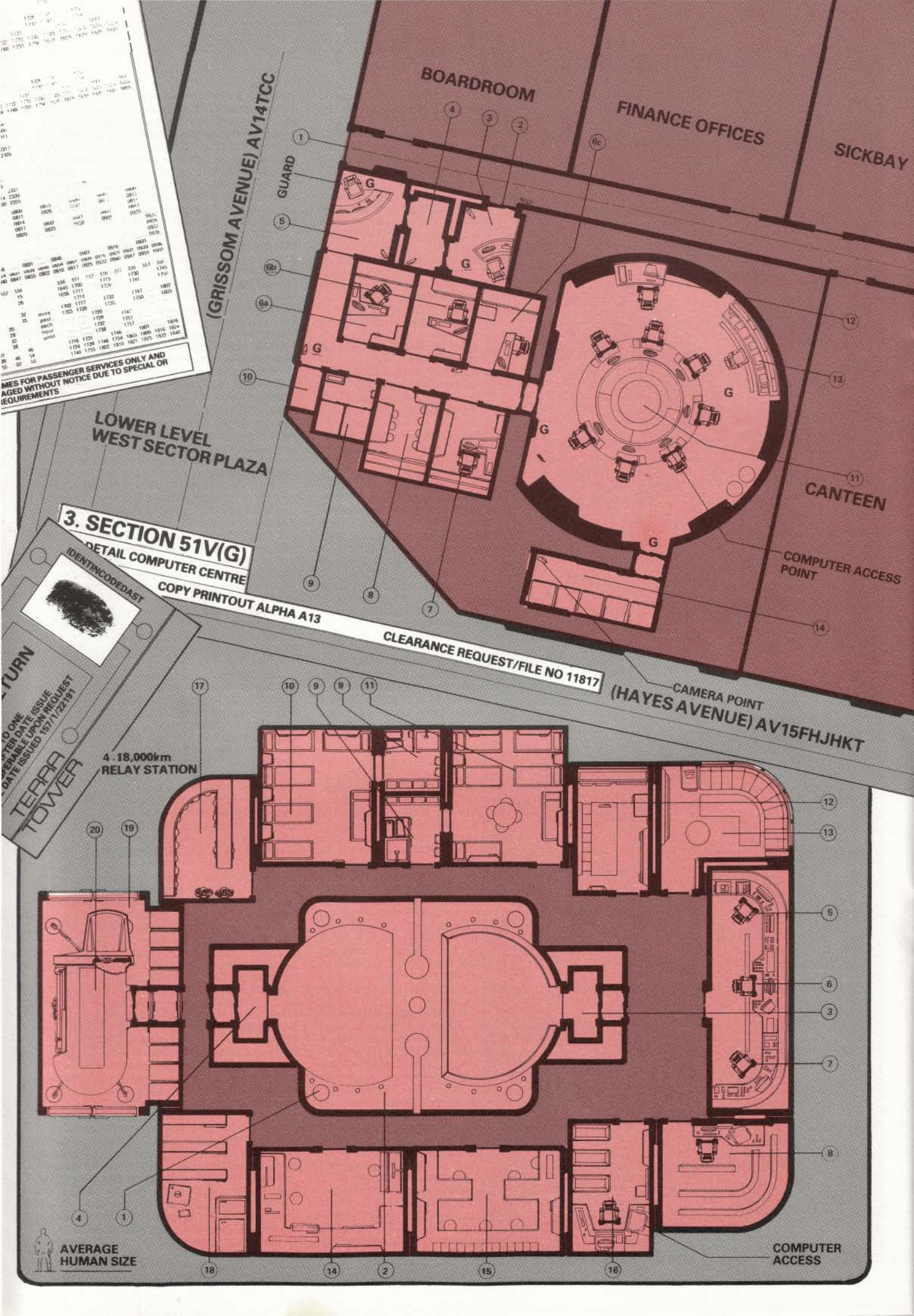
If the team has a maintenance schedule, Arkoff will know that a fresh team of engineers is sent to the midpoint station every Tuesday, staying for a week. He can also discover this information through one use of the tapeworm program or by bribery. If no plan is available, Arkoff will use the tapeworm again, to obtain a plan and notes on the 18,000km station's facilities [Module 9].

Using these notes, plus any diagrams they have obtained, the group must draw up a robbery plan. A few possibilites follow, with notes on their feasibility and likely consequences.

A. Block the track, so that the capsule will crash as it enters the station: this is just possible, if the team can use the station computer to close the docking flaps. Roll 11+ (+Computer, +Electrical) to do this. If this method is used the capsule will be travelling at 6,000kph when it hits the barrier, and will be completely destroyed. The shipment will disintegrate. The crash will be equivalent to a powerful missile strike in the station; on 4+ all air will be lost, on 11+ the Tower will be severed, with the lower part falling to Terra with an impact force equivalent to a multi-megaton nuclear explosion.

Note: Arkoff will point out the flaws in the plan if no one else does.

B. Use the tapeworm to override the traffic control system, and make the capsule stop in the station: The attempt must start at least 20 minutes before the capsule enters the station, to allow for deceleration. Roll 9+ (+ Computer, + Electronic) to take control at the first attempt, with a progressive –1 modifier on each subsequent attempt as time is lost. After five failures the capsule will be unable to stop.


BOARDROOM
FINANCE OFFICES
SICKBAY
(GRISSOM AVENUE) AV14TCC
GUARD
LOWER LEVEL
WEST SECTOR PLAZA
CANTEEN
COMPUTER ACCESS POINT
CAMERA POINT
(HAYES AVENUE) AV15FHJHKT
3. SECTION 51V(G)
DETAIL COMPUTER CENTRE
COPY PRINTOUT ALPHA A13
CLEARANCE REQUEST/FILE NO 11817
4 . 18,000km
RELAY STATION
TERRA TOWER
AVERAGE HUMAN SIZE
COMPUTER ACCESS

Once the capsule is controlled those below it will automatically stop the capsule at the correct position for entry through its airlock.

C. Destroy the traffic control system: Each capsule has an operator who will take manual control, and carry on at reduced speed until one of the terminals is reached. If this method is combined with a barrier, as in (A) above, the capsule and shipment will be destroyed but the station will not be endangered.

D. Cut power lines along the track, to stop the capsule: note that the Tower and station are not in weightlessness; there is .2g acceleration downwards at this altitude. Anyone going EVA to place charges risks falling, and must remember to be clear of the tracks whenever a capsule passes. If the lines are cut at exactly the right moment all the capsules on track will decelerate, and the correct capsule will stop in the station:

Roll 8+ (+ Demolition) to cut the cables, 9+ (+ Computer, Electrical) to choose the right moment. If the first roll succeeds but the second roll is failed, the money capsule will stop 20d6 kilometres from the station (1-3 above, 4-6 below).

While these plans are discussed Arkoff tends to remain quiet, leaving the team to work out details unless he sees an obvious flaw. Since he intends to stay on the ship during the robbery, he will oppose any plan which involves committing it before the shipment is secured, and will point out that Tower control will detect it as it approaches the station. The earlier the ship is committed, the more time for an interception by the Navy. He suggests using the tapeworm program to delete names from the list of engineers scheduled to work on the station, replacing them with team members.

If the characters listed in Module 2 are used as NPCs they will have the following viewpoints:

Bolinski doesn't have any worthwhile opinions.

Smith and Malmsey will favour plan B.

Harper favours any plan which minimises the risk to his ship. He will agree about the risk of approaching the Tower before the robbery.

Walker will criticise any plan, especially those areas involving the use of force. She tends to prefer violently unsubtle strategies.

Patti Jordani will go along with the majority, but will have 'a bad feeling' about plans A and C.

Players

Module 9a: 18,000km Station

See *Figure 4*.

1. Central core of Tower; five monomolecular cable bundles surrounded by foamed plasteel (**2**). Magnetic induction tracks are built into the plasteel.

3 and 4. Platforms. **3** is for ascending, **4** for descending capsules. These platforms are equipped with retracting docking flaps which make an airtight seal at floor and ceiling levels when a car has stopped in the station, to allow the platforms to be pressurised. Tower traffic is one car every 8 minutes, in each direction.

5 – 7. Communications relay control equipment.

8. Computer, model 3b.

9. WCs.

10 and 11. Dormitories.

12. Galley.

13. Commons.

14. Workshop (mechanical).

15. Workshop (electronic, electrical).

16. Traffic control equipment. This unit links various systems sensing the movement of traffic along the Tower and regulating the speed of cars.

17. Suit store. Contains emergency vacc suits for all personnel, and two normal vacc suits for outside maintenance.

18. Store room. Food, clothing, medical supplies.

19. Hangar. A pressurised compartment housing a small Grav-Truck (**20**), equipped with manipulation for routine servicing work around the Tower.

Referee Only

Module 9b: 18,000km Station

See Module 9a and *Fig 4* for full details:

3 and 4. Each platform is monitored by a video camera, linked to the traffic control equipment (**16**). Any attempt to move a docked capsule without retracting the flaps causes severe damage. On 6+ the capsule hold will depressurise, on 9+ one or more capsule ports will blow out, on 11+ the flaps themselves will rupture, exposing the platform to vacuum.

Throughout the station all computer terminals are linked to the communications system. Anyone who reaches any terminal will be able to warn Terra of a robbery.

13. Commons. There is a socket for a computer terminal in one corner, which isn't shown on the plan. All genuine engineers assigned to the station know that this socket exists, and that it can be used to connect a hand computer to the main computer.

15. Workshop. There are enough parts in this room to build a powerful transmitter.

17. Emergency suits hold an hour's air, and give protection equivalent to jack armour. They have simple radio units but no other facilities.

19. This compartment can be pressurised, but to save air it is usually left empty. A docking adaptor allows entry to the grav truck without a suit. However, the truck has no airlock and everyone aboard must wear a suit if its hatch is to be opened.

Referee Only

Module 10: Phase 3 – Tower Heist

Engineers assigned to the midpoint station must report to Tower departure control at 09.00 hours, boarding a capsule and leaving at approximately 09.30 hours. The engineers routinely carry tools, luggage, and other equipment for these assignments, and characters won't be stopped or searched unless they are obviously carrying weapons.

The capsule will reach the station 6d6 hours before the scheduled arrival of the money shipment. In addition to the team it will carry several real engineers, who should be taken from the list of pregenerated scientists in *Traveller Supplement 4*, to give a total of 12 passengers for the station.

Once the group reaches the station the referee should move the real engineers to random positions, as they unpack or start work. As team members go into action the engineers may see that something is going wrong, and try to warn Terra. They may also try to fight the team.

Provided there is no warning, the shipment is escorted by two fire teams, a total of eight Marines, with no other passengers or cargo carried. Each guard is equipped with combat armour, complete with vacuum seals and 4-hour air tanks (see *Book 4, Mercenary*), and carries a machine pistol, a snub pistol, two flechette grenades, two HE grenades, and a cutlass. One guard in each fire team carries a medical kit which includes vials of combat drug. As soon as the capsule starts to decelerate they will assume that something is wrong, and move to positions giving a good field of fire – on the staircase with a view of the airlock door, behind passenger seats, etc. The operator isn't paid to be a hero, and will try to stay safely out of a fight. Stewards aren't carried on these runs. The shipment is packed in twelve 100g steel cases in the hold.

If there is warning of the attack before the capsule is despatched, the Marines will be wearing battle dress and carrying gauss or laser rifles. The shipment will travel by an alternative route.

As soon as the capsule starts to slow, the Terran ground controllers will know that something is wrong, and the Navy and Marines will be alerted.

Referee Only

Module 11: Phase 4 – The Getaway

Arkoff will board the ship shortly before the team enters the station, carrying a case containing navigation programs and personal effects. If there is a player character pilot he will advise picking up the team twenty minutes after they start to intercept the capsule. If the pilot is an NPC this will happen automatically.

The station isn't equipped to dock a ship, so to save manoeuvring time the team must capture the shipment, load it into the Grav-Truck, and fly out to the ship.

If this plan is followed the team in the truck will run into a problem. A traffic controller will insist that the ship waits until a liner has docked. As the truck leaves the station a Marine G-Carrier (armed with a VRF gauss gun) will approach. This is one of several assigned to patrol the Tower when a shipment is due, and happens to be close enough to respond to the emergency. The players may decide to fight or run.

The G-Carrier is a standard design (as *Traveller Book 3*, 2nd edition, or *Striker Book 3*). The Grav-Truck has full armour (equivalent to that of the G-Carrier), but is unarmed and slower than the G-Carrier. After d6−1 minutes the ship will arrive, engage the G-Carrier, and take the team aboard.

The Navy can put d6−3 ships in combat range of the getaway ship (a roll below 1 indicates no ships). On a 1d6 roll of 1-4 they are fighters, otherwise they are system defence boats.

Arkoff has Navigation programs to travel to Barnards, scoop refuel, and jump on to Agidda. He has arranged to meet his contacts on Agidda and sell the shipment.

During this flight characters will probably get on each others nerves (Walker, in particular, has an extremely aggressive character if run as an NPC), and some fights will probably occur. It is possible that someone will decide to steal part of the shipment without waiting for Arkoff to sell it. All the cases are marked: 'Maximum Security – Anti-Theft Devices Fitted'

If any case is opened without a special key a thermite bomb will ignite, reducing its contents to worthless slag. Cases can be opened without the keys on 11+, (+ Demolitions, + Electronics). Arkoff's contacts have appropriate keys.

Arkoff has overestimated the value of the shipment, and the parts are worth 4.8 Megacredits. After the transaction is complete the team will be left with Cr2,016,000 to share.

Note 1. If this amount of cash will seriously upset a campaign (for example, if there are only two or three survivors), some of the charges may 'accidentally' go off without the cases being forced open.

Note 2. All the components are designed exclusively for large-scale military systems, and will not function correctly in any normal civilian vessel. For the purposes of this scenario a military ship is designed using *Book 5* (*High Guard*) rules exclusively. A *Book 2* design (eg a Scout or Merchant), even one using *Book 5* components, will not function correctly with these parts installed.

Once the shipment has been sold Arkoff will disappear, changing to his B'haal identity and catching a flight to Prometheus. Other characters will receive their agreed shares, and must make their own way off-world.

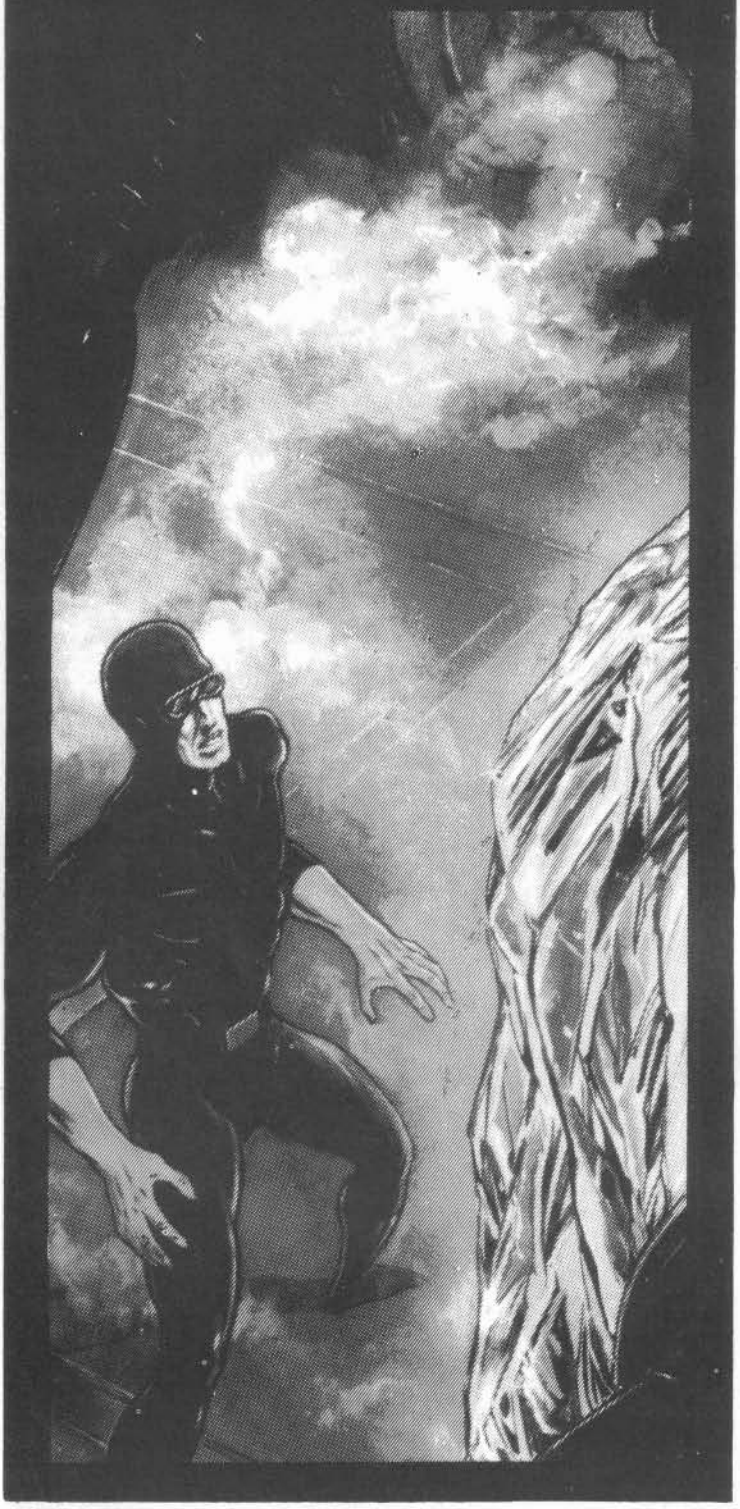
Module 12: Sources

This scenario was largely suggested by various articles and stories about Orbital Towers, in particular:

The Fountains of Paradise – Arthur C Clarke; *The Web Between the Worlds, Beanstalk*, and *How to Build a Beanstalk* – Charles Sheffield. The Tower described is a fairly modest design, sharing some of the features described by both authors.

The criminal element was largely suggested by the novels of Richard Stark (Donald E Westlake), in particular: *Butchers Moon, The Outfit, Killtown, Run Lethal, The Steel Hit* and *The Green Eagle Score*. These novels are strongly recommended to referees who wish to incorporate violent crime into a campaign. □

Queen Victoria and the Holy Grail



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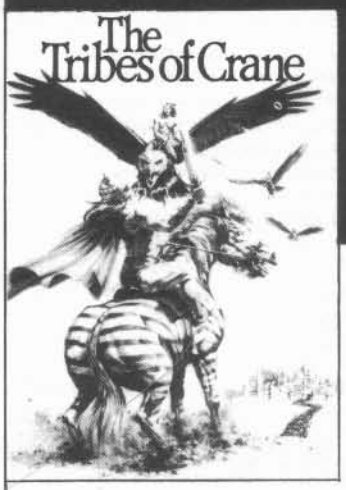

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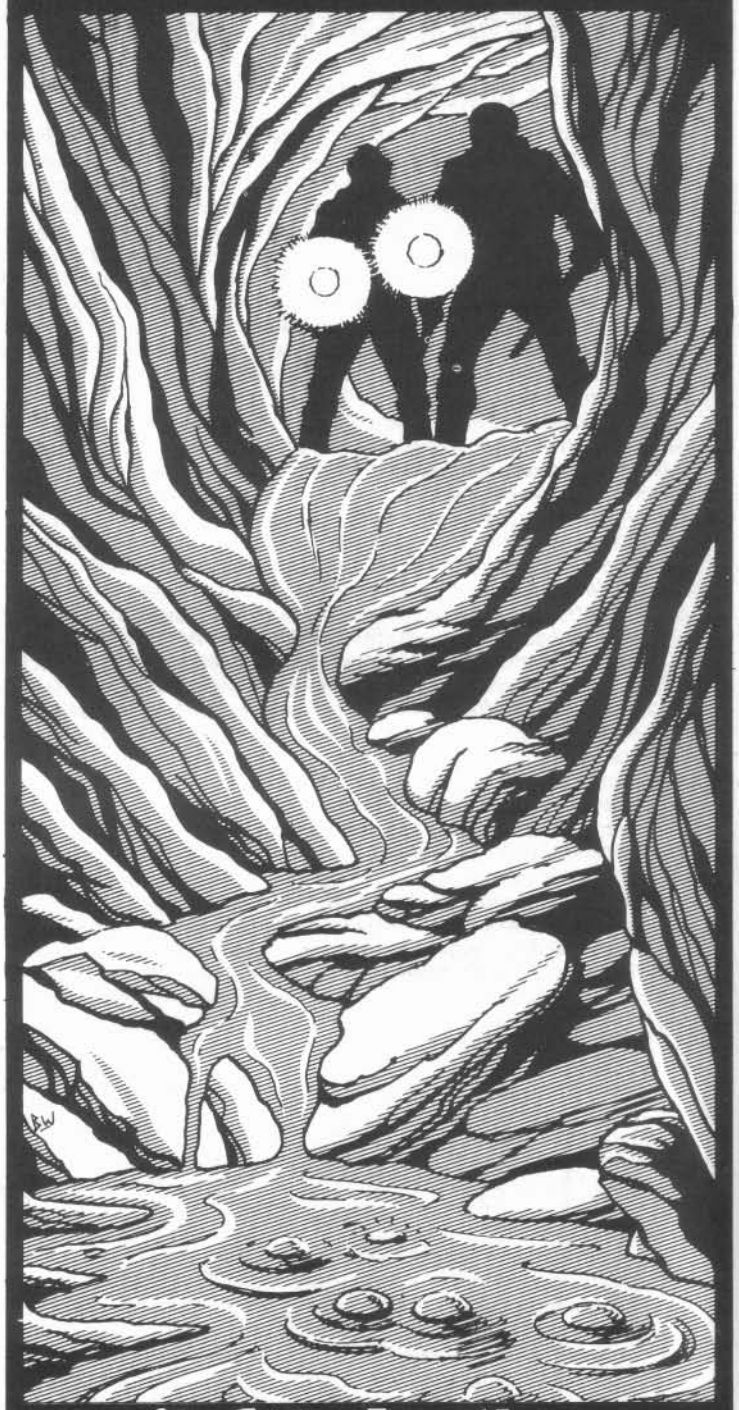

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MONSTERS HAVE FEELINGS TOO TWO

by Oliver MacDonald

My aim in the original *Monsters Have Feelings Too* [*WD38*] article was to show that a monster, or indeed any NPC, need not simply be fodder for adventurers' swords and players' egos. Instead I argued that when run as intelligent, thinking beings, a lot could be added to the game; if the characters were faced with organised groups of monsters that actually used a few tactics and behaved as if they would really rather stay alive, then encounters could be made more exciting and would be decided on rather more than who had most hit points. However, I really only touched the surface of the subject and I feel that the time has come to reiterate and expand on the points raised previously.

Many game masters (GMs), particularly inexperienced ones, find that after a few months of running a role-playing game the players begin to get bored with the old routine of kick down the door, kill the monsters and count the treasure. Obviously something new is needed to make the game interesting again and to recreate the sense of wonder that is an essential part of any fantasy. For most GMs this problem is, apparently, quickly and easily achieved by adding new monsters to the game. Suddenly the players are faced with a creature they have never come across before, one that is not in the rules. Everyone is excited again, what can it do? How do we kill it?

This solution is at best just a temporary one. A continual series of new creatures will in itself eventually become boring. Only if the GM plays these new monsters very carefully indeed is he or she really adding anything new to the game. To be really effective a new monster must be played in such a way that the characters slowly discover the mysteries of this new species: in a way similar to that in which the plot of a good detective story is unravelled, for example. To play to the high standard that this requires needs a very experienced GM indeed. In most cases all that happens is that a guessing game develops between the players and the GM. The players are presented with a twelve spotted purple creature that vaguely resembles a cross between a . . . fill in the blanks . . . and has a barely pronounceable name. The players now have to guess what it can do and how to kill it; once they have made their choices then they can attack it, find out how wrong they were and on the basis of this, guess and try again. This procedure is to be repeated until either the monster or characters run out of hit points. Role-playing games are supposed to be, at least partly, games of skill but in a situation such as this it is very hard to find evidence of any skill actually being used or required.

Furthermore, who can really believe in a world that constantly spews out new forms with no apparent reason? Where do all these creatures come from? Why has no one ever seen them before? Every once in a while all GMs like to throw in a new monster, and there is nothing wrong with that. After all we are bound at some time or other to think up or read of something that catches our eye and which we cannot resist using, or we may even find that we need to create a new monster to fill some particular niche in a scenario that none of the existing ones are really suited to. But to throw such creatures at our players on a regular basis just to liven up the game, surely this is a naïve and unimaginative approach to GMing.

In my games, even when playing *RuneQuest* which describes a relatively small number of monster species compared to some games and their innumerable supplements, I have found myself using a greatly reduced range of monsters on any sort of regular basis. Instead I try to use the well known monsters in interesting ways and as an integral part of the mystery surrounding the adventure. I aim, not to present the characters with something that will just lead to an interesting fight, but with a situation that is confusing and mysterious and which forces them to use a little bit more of their grey matter than that which a sword or spell requires.

Players often say that the standard monsters – the orcs, goblins, and trollkin of the various worlds – are boring. But the reason for this is nothing inherent in the monsters themselves but rather in the way they are played. A group of orcs in a room that blindly attack anything that enters and then fight to the death most certainly are boring. But if you think about what I have already said this is true of any monster no matter how

many powers or hit points it has. If the monsters are credited with a little bit of intelligence, or just plain animal cunning by the GM, things very quickly liven up. To start with the GM should observe the following guidelines for every encounter that he or she places:

1. The monsters must have a reason for being where they are and doing what they are doing.
2. They must be properly equipped and will behave in a manner so as to carry out whatever it is that they are doing to the best of their ability.
3. The reaction of the monsters to the party and to any other creatures must be known and justified (and should not always be overtly hostile).

Let us imagine, for example, that an encounter is with a group of orcs. Rather than just having a group of x many orcs with y hit points that the party stumbles across in the middle of nowhere, and which leap out and attack the characters for no good reason, the GM, after looking at the above guidelines, may decide that this is an orc raiding party. Following on from this the GM must then decide why they are raiding this area. The reason may be fairly general, perhaps they are after food, or they might have a more specific purpose like being hired to kidnap someone. In which case the reasons behind this must then also be justified, and could even eventually lead to a complete scenario in itself.

The group must be appropriately equipped, organised and supplied and will consist of the relevant warrior, scout and leader types. Women, children and pensioners belong in encounters with family groups not raiding parties. Any raiding party must act appropriately if it is to stand a chance of succeeding. They will not just blunder blindly around the countryside but will send out scouts and when camped will post sentries. In this particular situation the GM should also specify whether the orcs are on their way to a raid or returning from one. If they are on their way home then they may have wounded to tend and be weighed down by their spoils, or at least their mules will be. There may also be somewhere nearby that has been attacked and pillaged by the orcs. If they are still in foreign lands they will obviously be nervous and potentially hostile, as everyone is probably their enemy. There may even be a posse out after them and a reward on their heads. However, if they are nearing home they may be more relaxed, having already shaken off any pursuit.

The situation has now become more interesting. With the orcs using scouts it is unlikely that the characters are going to blunder into the middle of an unprepared rabble. Their first encounter is most likely to be with one of the sentries or scouts. If they are really careless he will probably be able to sneak away unseen to warn the main body of orcs, perhaps giving them the opportunity to prepare an ambush. If the party are going to turn the tables on the orcs and ambush them then they have the problem of either sneaking past the sentries or killing them silently and quickly, so that they do not get a chance to warn the others. If the orcs are returning from a raid then they are unlikely to hang around for a pitched battle if they don't have to. A few well placed archers might be used as a rear guard to pin the party down while the rest make good their escape. If the party then try to make pursuit then they had better be on the look out for ambushes.

This is only a very simple example of what can be done with basic monsters. Even 'wandering' monsters should be dealt with in this way. In fact a good GM should rarely find the need to use monsters that are not connected with the scenario in some way. If wandering monsters of any kind are used then it is best to prepare them before a game session and so allow yourself time to properly plan the encounter. A well organised GM should never need to generate monsters during the course of a game, and should certainly never use random tables to do so, except perhaps as a source of ideas.

Using the standard monsters in most cases also gains the GM another benefit. A powerful monster is always powerful, but the weaker, more common monsters can be played in different ways, making their strength more flexible. For example, against high level characters the monsters will probably ambush the party firing a few volleys of arrows and then fleeing before the characters can organise themselves for a counter attack. Against low level characters I would probably play the monsters either as a disorganised rabble or arrange it so that the characters surprised the monsters not the other way around.

So much for isolated and one-off encounters. If we are going to play our monsters intelligently and not let all fights end in a massacre, then we can start using yet another idea to liven up our games. If monsters are given the intelligence to run away occasionally so that they live to fight another day, let them do just that. Later in the scenario, or perhaps in another adventure altogether, the players may run across the same group of monsters. If they have stolen something from a group of monsters then it seems sensible that the monsters should try to get it back. If they killed some then their friends might be out for revenge. I once had a party pursued by no less than five sets of monsters, a group of bugbears from a village they had stolen from, some vampires they had annoyed by pouring holy water into their coffins, a group of elves from a forest where they had unsuccessfully tried to assassinate their king, a storm giant whose mate they had killed and finally a demon that one of the party had disobeyed. In the end they had to flee the area and hide until things cooled off.

Another, related, idea is that of the archvillain, someone who is behind and organises many of the monsters. The archvillain should be someone who sends lesser monsters out to do his dirty deeds. Needless to say this invariably results in the involvement of the PCs. Obviously the archvillain should be very hard for the characters to get at, the most they should normally see of him is perhaps a dark shadow fleeing through a secret door, or disappearing into the woods on the other side of a raging torrent that they have no way of crossing. In true archvillain fashion, he is likely to have declared that he will return one day to exact his revenge.

In this way long-standing feuds can be built up between the player characters and one or more of the major monsters or NPCs. Whole series of scenarios can be played leading up to 'The Final Confrontation'. Of course even then the archvillain may not really be defeated and killed, even if he appeared to be. Perhaps he teleported out moments before the roof caved in, or he had previously made arrangements for his resurrection. Just imagine the look on the players' faces when perhaps six months later, real time, the character they 'know' to be dead turns up whole again with a new set of followers.

Just as a good player through role-playing will breathe life into their characters in such a way that each develops a distinct personality of their own, so a good GM should attempt to do the same with NPCs and monsters. Similarly, just as a character should consist of more than is actually written on the character sheet, so a monster should be more than a few hit points and a stereotyped description of the species taken from the rule book. The degree of characterisation that a GM can put into monsters is inherently more limited than that the players can apply to their characters. A player only has to roleplay one or two characters at once. The GM on the other hand has a whole world to look after and can obviously lavish rather less attention on any given individual. The amount of characterisation that the GM should put into NPCs and monsters is dependent on their importance. The most important should always have some sort of distinct recognisable and consistent personality of their own. Ideally if they carry out some dastardly deed the characters should have a chance of recognising their style. They might be able to say, for example, 'Hmm, this looks like the work of the efreet Gialsco', or, if they are attacking one of the monster's strongholds they might be able to plan for the fact that his guards always have a ballista placed at the end of the main corridor. Very often it is useful for the GM to keep notes on each major NPC detailing their personality, updating these as the campaign progresses and the character develops further.

Although characterisation of minor monsters is less important it should not be completely ignored. A little bit of practice and prior thought will allow most GMs to improvise at least a basic personality during a game. Initially these characters will probably be highly stereotyped, such as the typical bombastic drunken dwarf. But with time a GM will learn to add in those little subtleties that makes this stereotype a foundation for a complete personality.

If all this sounds like hard work and a heavy burden for the GM, well I suppose to a certain extent it is, but then no one ever said GMing was easy. One cannot expect to become a good GM overnight. The important thing to remember is that the development of the GM's world and its inhabitants should keep pace with the expectations of the players and their characters.

Fantasy role-playing games are about imagination and characterisation, and playing out a role in an imaginary world. If your players' own characters are to be believable then so should the world in which they live. □

JUST GOOD FIENDS

What Makes an Interesting Monster, by Ian Marsh

Designing new monsters and creatures for adventurers to encounter is a long-established practice in the world of role-playing games. Many thousands of new monsters have been created for these games, especially for *AD&D*, and yet relatively few of them see publication. *Fiend Factory* has covered *AD&D* monsters since *White Dwarf 6* and columns such as *RuneRites* and *Starbase* feature them from time to time for *RuneQuest* and *Traveller* respectively. Yet very few guidelines have been given by any of these as to what makes a good monster that the magazine considers is worth the attention of its readers? Given that *Fiend Factory* now includes submissions for all role-playing systems, it seems to be a good time to expound on the points that are considered when deciding the make-up of each *Fiend Factory*.

A brief look at the monsters that have appeared in the relevant games rulebooks and in the pages of *White Dwarf* should serve to illustrate roughly what a good monster is. This isn't to say, of course, that all the monsters to have appeared in print are necessarily the pinnacle of monsterdom. The obligations of regular columns and the demands of the readership and games players take their toll on the overall quality of new creatures, and can only result in the inclusion of less exceptional monsters from time to time. As a guide to the sort and amount of information required to detail a particular creature, references to established monsters are a great help.

Firstly, however, the various roles that monsters are required for should be examined. The companion article in this issue, *Monsters Have Feelings Too Two*, illustrates how monsters can be used in different ways to provide more variety; potential monster designers are advised to note its sentiments. Depending on the style of game you play, creatures may be designed as 'ripping machines', sword-fodder, distinct sentient races, 'harmless' natural animals or curios; each of these having their own good reasons for existing in game terms. Not all of these are desirable as far as *Fiend Factory* is concerned, unless there is some unique quality that sets them apart from run of the mill creations. The most commonly rejected monster from *Fiend Factory* is one that pays scant attention to the appearance and habits of the creature, but instead details armour class, attacks, damage and special abilities: a creative GM should recognise the fact that there is more to a monster than its details in terms of game mechanics. Such a creature lacks much of the information required to integrate it into the game and seldom provides interesting reading.

One surprising fault is the description of a new creature – or rather the lack of one. Those of you who can remember the *All the World's Monsters* volumes will be all too aware of this lack and how frustrating it is in play. Being able to visualise the fantastic creatures is part of the atmosphere of rolegames. Random creation tables are often the root cause of this – either creating ludicrous looking monsters or concentrating on the mechanics. It is very rare for a monster generated on these tables to fit in anything like as well as a creature especially designed with a game world in mind. Although fantastic, mythical creatures are often a little strange themselves, it's a good idea to try envisaging the creature and asking the vital question 'Would I laugh if I saw it?' If yes, then it's back to the drawing board. A monster's appearance should evoke emotions such as fear, loathing, admiration or sympathy. Oddballs tend to be designed to fit in with the feel of a game – such as the *RuneQuest* ducks – and limit the amount of comic relief a new monster can give: not all games have room for 'were-bananas'.

New creatures should also be 'complete' for the game they are designed for. Although the idea behind a monster is more important than its absolute quantification in games mechanics, to give a uniform interpretation of the creature, all its quirks should be expressed in the game's terminology. For example, describing special powers in terms of spells, psionics or whatever rather than inventing a new system for them or not describing them at all! Way back in *White Dwarf 6*, Don Turnbull made the point that 'a monster should either be killable or, if effectively immortal, should have a specific purpose other than slaughtering player-characters'. This is still true seven years later and monster statistics should therefore be reasonable, in line with those of their peers.

Both appearance and statistics are relatively minor concerns when it comes to designing an interesting monster –

they are useful but not necessarily vital elements in committing a creature to paper. Rather it is the *raison d'etre* of the monster and its unique qualities and peculiarities that are of most importance. It is here that the creative abilities of the games master come into play. By giving an original rationale to a creature, be it weak and timorous or strong and fearsome, it is possible to give a two-dimensional creature of paper a tangible, three-dimensional existence.

Background information on a creature is largely dependent on the setting of the game the creature is intended for. Ravenous Bug-Blatter Beasts would be unsuitable for inclusion in an Arthurian fantasy setting, yet would be more than at home in a *Toon* or a *Paranoia* environment. How 'straight' the setting is determines the effect a new creature would have on it. Even if we only consider the range of fantasy role-playing games there are notable differences in style – ranging from the wacky, zany environment encouraged for *Warhammer*, through the polyglot settings of the *AD&D* universe, to the straight, society-tied worlds of *Bushido* and *Pendragon* and the almost straight *RuneQuest* mythos. Anything that doesn't fit in with the setting, through being inconsistent with the other monsters and creatures, will only destroy the illusion of the game's reality. Therefore, any new monster should be considered in light of the effect it has on the game world it is to be fitted into.

For some games this is easy to define – these are the rolegames whose background is already largely fixed: *Call of Cthulhu, Middle-earth Role Playing* and even *Toon*. All these games have a unique character: *Cthulhu* creatures should instil terror and revulsion in those encountering them, even if the creatures are themselves weak; new *MERP* creatures should tie into the works of Tolkien without disrupting the unique flavour of Middle-earth; whilst in stark contrast, *Toon* creatures are the wild, unbelievable beasts which would disrupt such a serious setting. Tied settings encourage 'thinking in tune with the environment'. Monsters and creatures evolving in such an atmosphere are much more believable, and much easier to envisage for both games master and players due to the element of common knowledge. Conversely, it becomes much harder to think of new, suitable creatures! Polyglot systems would appear to have an advantage, therefore, in that, 'anything goes' – straight or humorous, probable or improbable. Yet it is this diversity of options which provides a stumbling block for creative new ideas. Many of the monsters created for *AD&D*, for example, are very similar – the tribal monsters are a good case in point, not being orcs but being orcs (if you follow my logic). Despite background, behavioural notes, intricate details of societies and habits, such monsters are unsuccessful and unnecessary because their role in the world is already filled.

The exception to this is in the introduction of several unique tribal monsters, all of whom are engaged in some great counter-play. The most familiar example is the relationship between men, elves, dwarfs and orcs in *Lord of the Rings* and which is easily extended to other races in different settings. The set up is familiar in other literary works – Thomas Covenant, to name but one – as a common plot element, and creatures taken from literature of this nature always tend to work best together, restricting their coverage to adaptions from the books. Whilst *White Dwarf* does cover such adaptions occasionally, they are relatively simple constructs and provoke much argument as to the individual interpretation. Although, therefore, this area of development is not forbidden to the budding monster designer, something that is a little more original usually finds its way into *Fiend Factory*.

Which brings me to the final elements in monster creation – subject and originality. Most new monsters are of the individual or small group kind once the tribal creatures have been set to one side. Their mythical equivalents are the beasts of legend and it is to creatures such as the griffin, the pegasus and harpies that a monster designer should look. Each of these has a particular feature that makes it special – the element that should, if possible be present in new monsters. This element of originality is the one that is hardest to advise about since, by definition, it is unique! (Anyone who could invent 'Originality Potions' would corner the market!) In most cases, the element is sparked off by unusual influences as part of the creative capacity of the GM. Fantasy and science fiction novels are a rich source not only for the monsters the author has already thought of but for the subtle influences they leave behind. These tend to resurface at a later date, with all trace of the original source of inspiration forgotten. A varied diet of fantasy and SF is best since it will create a pleasing blend of diverse elements. Superstitions and old beliefs can also provide ideas: players of *AD&D* will undoubtedly be acquainted with the guardian familiar in the *Fiend Folio*. This originally appeared in *Fiend Factory* and was based on the concept of a cat having nine lives – in the context of *AD&D* adventures it was a good monster.

Essentially, therefore, there are only a few points to bear in mind when designing a new monster. Firstly it should belong to the game or game world it is designed for, being relatively believable (given that the games have an imaginary setting). Secondly, the monster should show sign of creativity on the part of its designer, being more than something extra to kill or ensnare the characters. Finally, the designer should consider the effects of humour and/or quirkiness on game balance and atmosphere.

By way of example, I would like to represent an *AD&D* monster from *WD61* which appeared in a scenario of mine. Due to space requirements, the creature was poorly detailed and gave little impression as to its exact capabilities and powers. Bear with me!

The basis behind the psychic vampire (*WD61*: woods vampire) was a need for an 'innocent' plot device that would allow itself to be manipulated by others yet be perfectly capable of resisting if it so chose. Thus was born this thought-stealing creature that acted altruistically – yet who would ever believe in or trust a *good* vampire?

PSYCHIC VAMPIRE

No Appearing:	1
Armour Class:	5
Movement:	12"
Hit Dice:	4
Treasure:	Nil
Attack:	By spells only
Alignment:	NG
Intelligence:	High

Psychic vampires are peaceable creatures that feed off the thought patterns of other beings. They are native to woodlands and are often friendly with other residents of the forest, particularly dryads. They appear as youths of indeterminate sex, although both sexes exist. If it were not for their more human features they could easily be mistaken for elves. This point is heightened by their dress, which is simple in design and of woodland hues.

Their role in the forest is very much as a comforter to other woodland beasts. As a result, psychic vampires have a special affinity for these animals and can rely on them for protection and companionship. Stray travellers forced to spend a night alone in the forest are also likely to encounter psychic vampires, although being asleep it is doubtful that they will remember the experience. Adventurers usually provide an interesting, different source of experiences for the vampire. Victims who are widely travelled or who have had interesting experiences in their past may well induce a psychic vampire to mingle with human society and overcome its retiring nature.

Its primary source of defence and offence are its magical abilities – with which the psychic vampire can ensnare or calm its victims. Twice per day it may use the abilities of *remove fear, resist cold, invisibility, speak with animals* and *cure light wounds*. In woodlands, the psychic vampire moves as if using the druidic spell *pass without trace* – it also has the abilities of a 4th level thief in other terrain. Its special power is a powerful *charm* spell which may be used twice per day, but acts as the druidic spell *charm person or mammal*: it can also provide a link between the vampire and the victim enabling memories and emotions to be absorbed by the psychic vampire. The victim also suffers a temporary memory loss for a period equal to 21–INT hours. Such contact also relieves the victim of any anxieties he/she may have been suffering from – the vampire effectively absorbs the problem.

Being a woodland creature, it also has some limited knowledge of herbalism, and it uses extracts of suitable herbs to relax and soothe its victims; the tinctures of these herbs are usually burnt in the form of a candle. If it uses herbs and its *charm* ability, the saving throw is made at –2.

Given its rich source of material – ideas, adventures and experiences – and its natural charm, a psychic vampire makes a good orator, forcing even the most reluctant listener to stop and be entertained. □

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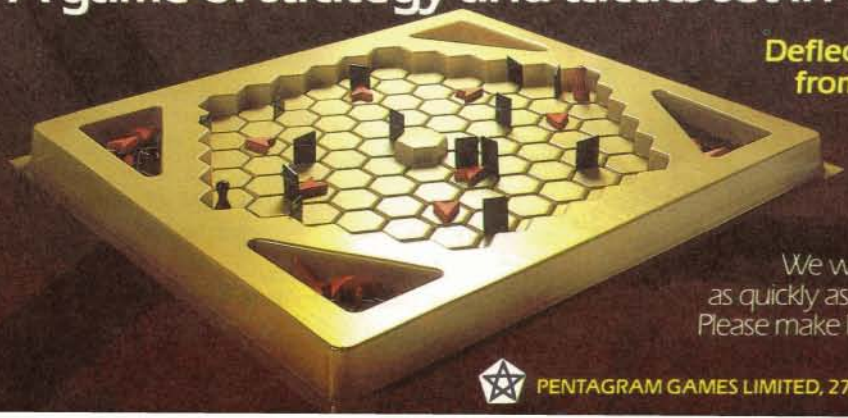

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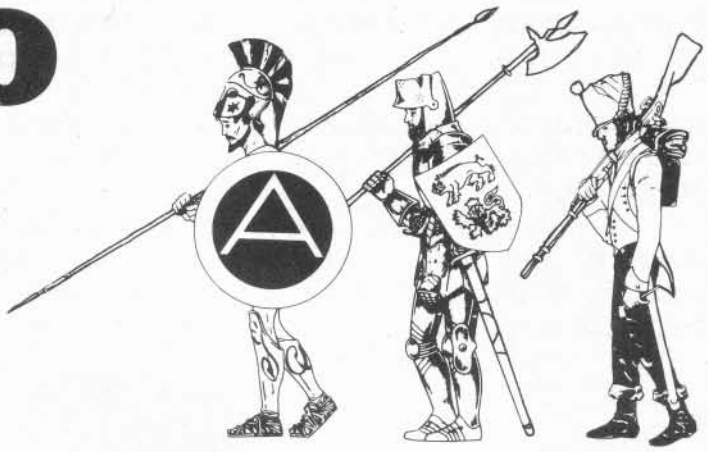

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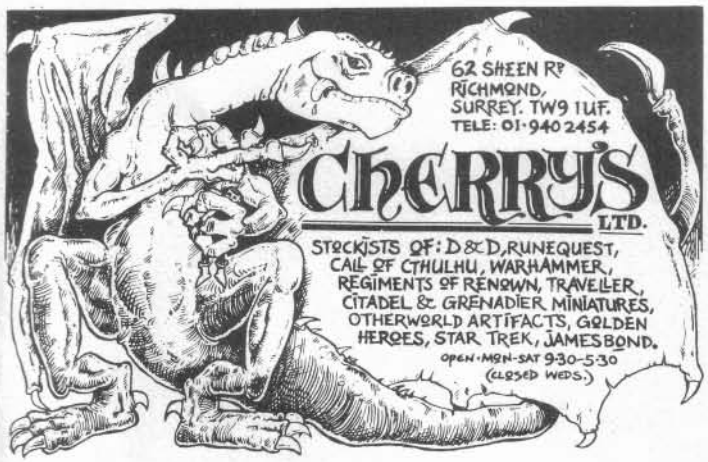

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Treasure Chest *is a regular department for readers' ideas about the* AD&D *game. This issue, two magic items to help adventurers.*

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3	The Moneylender	13	Disease
4	The Sorcerer	14	Wealth
5	The Hangman	15	Deceit
6	The Thief	16	Knowledge
7	The Soldier	17	Love
8	The Assassin	18	Trust
9	The Politician	19	Fame
10	The Dead Man	20	Religion

THE CARD OF SHUKELI
by Michael Welch

Legend has it that in a time long past, the great prophet and visionary of that era, Shukeli of Pasalia, foresaw his own demise and focused his attentions on a project that would ensure that the world would not totally be without his skills in the future.

The result of this action was the creation of a card of prophecy that could predict dominant forces in a person's near future. The card looks like an ordinary tarot card, but the face seen is shaped by the likely future of the person holding it. Once a person has held the card, on subsequent uses, he will see the same face unless the event to which it refers has passed in time. The knowledge of the future does, however, enable the person to change his destiny so that the actual event may not take place. The card will show a new face after the time the event would have taken place.

If different members of a party take turns in holding the card they may see different faces, but it is more likely that the predicted event will affect the party as a whole, ie they all have the same immediate dominating force in their futures. When the card is not being held, the face seen is the last one which appeared.

If the dungeon master wishes, the card can be 'found' in the course of an adventure, in which case the current face should be determined by the roll of a d20. A more interesting method of introduction is to have the card in the possession of a non-player character who is certain to be killed by the party – the card could then fall to the ground showing the face of Death (remember that it will change – so the finder hopes – as soon as it is picked up).

Other methods to introduce the card can be used instead – these are limited only by the DM's imagination and the twenty available faces of the card (to which more may be added if desired). The DM must be careful when deciding what face the players will see. It will be chiefly determined by his plans for the future of the campaign, but should be chosen with skill and subtlety to avoid the use of the card being predictable in its outcome. For example: 'Oh no, not 'War' again – looks like we're going to run into a load of orcs again lads.'

It is far more effective to make the card refer, in this case for example, to one particularly deadly orc who has something unusual about him: perhaps he is a plague carrier and his comrades are unaware of this, but one of the party notices that the orc has great difficulty in breathing and that they have just turned up the Disease card. In this way the conflict may be avoided and the orcs either made to turn on their comrade or run away. If the party were exhausted and badly wounded, this would be preferable to a fight and is an interesting use of the card.

In particular, the Death card should rarely be used. When it does turn up, the holder of the card should feel *genuinely* terrified – 'No! Not me! I've had this character for four years . . . '

The *Card of Shukeli* cannot be torn, cut, burnt, ruined in water or otherwise destroyed. A *dispel magic* will cause the card to generate random faces (unbeknown to the players who may still be influenced by what it shows) and a second *dispel magic* will permanently erase the face of the card, making it useless.

The twenty faces are subdivided into two groups of ten. The first ten indicate a single person who is of great importance to the holder's future and the second group refers to a general event or state of affairs that the holder will become involved in:

TELLSTONES
by J Woodward

Long ago these devices were first made by a cult of quasi-religious thieves. Some say that there are various thieves' guilds that make them still, but this is only hearsay.

Found inside a small, intricately worked silver casket about the size of a snuff box (value 75gp) will be a pair of small stones, about 25mm in diameter. Covering the stones are two identical sets of runes; if the finder can read magic, the runes will inform him of the twin uses of the stones.

If the first command word spoken and one of the stones is placed on the ground, it will act as a directional beacon (range 1 kilometre) for the other. To locate the direction of the first stone, the user must hold the second in his hand and rotate slowly. When his hand is pointing in the direction of the other stone, the temperature of both stones will rise by some 20°C. This direction-finding ability is not blocked by earth or metal.

If the second command word is said and one of the stones is placed by an entranceway, the other stone being held in the hand, the held stone will increase in temperature if someone passes through the entrance. The basic temperature rise will be 20°C + 1°C for each additional person passing through the entrance at the same time. (It should be noted that distinguishing between temperature rises as far as 5°C apart can be difficult.)

The stones will operate in the above fashions for each one of their charges. When found, the combined pair will have 2d10 charges.

Tellstones are commonly found separately and hence the finder's task is to locate the other stone using the first power. □

Tabletop Heroes *is a regular column covering painting and modelling tips for miniature figures, by Joe Dever.*

THINK INK

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

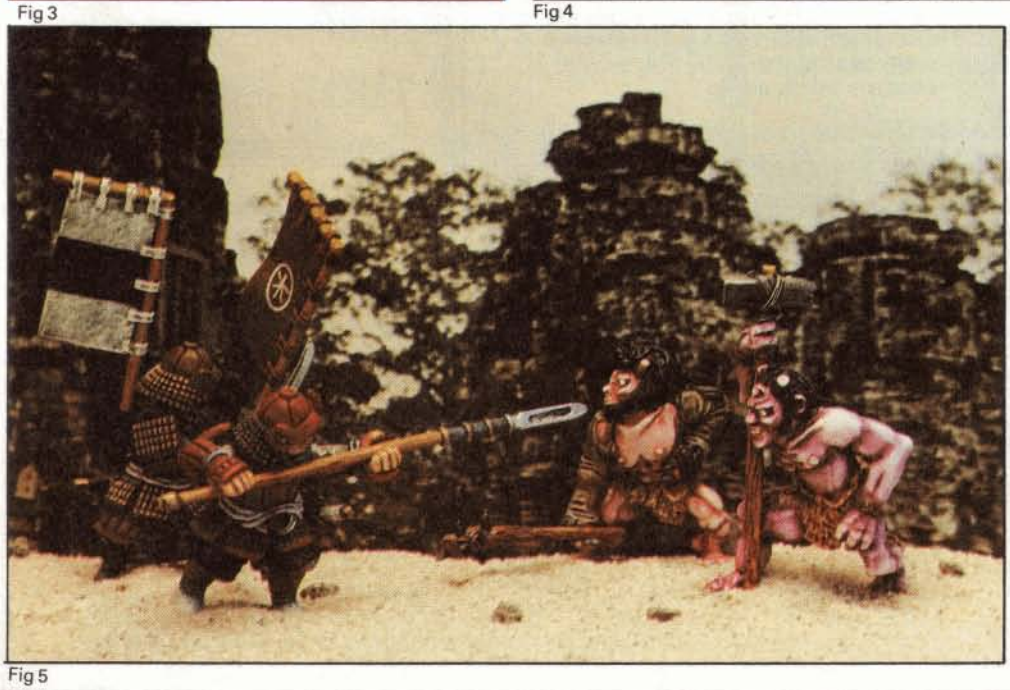

Fig 5

Fig 6

All photographs by Joe Dever

The use of coloured drawing inks to tint painted miniatures is a process that few painters, particularly beginners, consider as an alternative to the more tried and tested techniques of dry-brushing and washing. However, because inks are transparent and the variety of colours available is wide, they can and should be used to enhance your model painting and make possible a whole new range of realistic or unusual effects.

The resin-based (shellac) inks made by *Windsor and Newton*, for example, are ideal for giving depth and richness to leather items such as boots, backpacks, belts and jackets. Just wash over your painted model with undiluted ink and allow each coat to dry before deciding whether a further coat is necessary or not. I have found that up to three coats are sometimes needed to obtain the desired effect, especially where inks are applied to a white or light coloured base. The skin colour of the dai-oni featured in *Fig 3*, was achieved by three washes of turquoise drawing ink applied to a matt white acrylic undercoat. The uniformity of tone, particularly on the raised areas, was easier to accomplish using inks as opposed to using thinned acrylic or enamel paint. Nut brown, applied to a matt dark grey base, gives a very convincing dark leather finish, and brick red applied to a matt hull red base (*Humbrol* enamel HN5 or *Tamiya* acrylic XF9) is a most effective simulation of polished brown leather. Hair is another feature that can benefit greatly from an ink wash. Instead of using a dark base colour and dry-brushing with a lighter shade, try painting the hair in just the lighter shade and allow it to dry. Apply brown or red ink as a wash to the base colour and it will flow into the crevices leaving the highlights in the lighter colour. Subtle shades of blond, light brown and auburn hair can be achieved using this technique.

Deep red and nut brown, thinned with some distilled water (tap water impurities can ruin the flow of the ink; try some defrosted ice from your fridge if you've no distilled water to hand), can be used to enhance gold and bronze armour by making rivets and buckles more prominent. For steel and iron armour use thinned black India ink washed over the basic metal finish, and apply additional coats depending on how tarnished you wish the armour to appear. This is particularly effective on chainmail and battered plate armour.

The *Windsor & Newton* range of inks can be intermixed, and many subtle and impressive finishes can be achieved by building up layers of different inks one after another, or by mixing shades whilst they are still wet. Sometimes you may find that some enamel paints cause an ink wash to become patchy and uneven. This is due to oily surface residues left behind by the enamel's base, and can be prevented by coating your figure with an acrylic medium (*Tamiya* is recommended) which will seal off the oily surface and provide a good key for the ink to adhere to. When using inks, it is essential to varnish your figure afterwards, for inks do not stand up to repeated handling. Also, it is worth considering carefully the type of varnish to use and when to use it. A superb leather finish can be lost beneath a matt varnish, and metallic paint has a tendency to run if varnished within 4-5 days of it being applied to a model. *Humbrol* produce a range of varnishes (matt, satin or gloss) that can be applied selectively by brush or aerosol.

'Inks . . . make possible a whole new range of realistic or unusual effects.'

This Month's Photographs

A distinctly Japanese flavour pervades this month's photopage, although I'm sure the Arch Demon (*Citadel C28 Giant Demons Range*: £3.95) featured in *Fig 1*, would be more at home in a Cthulhu or Melnibonean mythos. This model was painted by Terry Higgins, using enamels dry-brushed and blended over a black undercoat, which was allowed to show through to emphasise the creature's muscle tone.

Fig 2 shows three models from the distinctive *Ninja* range by *Dixon Miniatures*: SN6 – ninja with blowpipe, SN5 – ninja wielding staff and SN4 – ninja with kusari-gama – all 36p each. *Dixon* produce by far the most comprehensive of all oriental role-playing and wargaming figure ranges, and have recently introduced a new fantasy section entitled *Legends of Nippon*, representing the more weird and diverse creatures of Japanese legend. One such creature is featured in *Fig 3*, a dai-oni (*DO1*: 75p). Together with its smaller brethren and the bakemono goblins, they form an extensive range of oriental monsters that can be used for games like *Bushido*.

Making fine figures for wargaming armies or player characters are the two representatives in *Fig 4* of the large range of *Dixon* samurai. The figure on the left is a samurai commander with saihai (war-fan), *SC1*; the one on the right is an armoured samurai archer (*25-10*) of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods.

In *Fig 5*, we see two more *Dixon* samurai (*FS1*: samurai on guard with tachi, and *FS3*: samurai with yari – both 36p), this time in combat with two oni (*O3*: oni with club, and *O2*: oni with mallet – both 55p), recent additions to the *Legends* range. The figures were designed by Mark Copplestone and are cast in a fine lead alloy that is virtually flash-free. A fully illustrated catalogue is available direct from *Dixon*, priced £1.50.

For readers unfamiliar with or confused by the terminology, the two swords worn by the samurai were known as the dai-sho, comprising the tachi, which was suspended from the waist (or the katana, which was pushed through the waist sash the opposite way up to the tachi or carried on the back) and the wakizashi (short sword) which was tucked in the uwa-obi (belt). Occasionally a large sword was used which was the no-dachi or 'great sword', which could be up to 7ft long. Other weapons in the samurai armoury were the yari (spear) and the deadly naginata (sword blade atop a pole). The samurai's armour consisted of lacquered plates fastened together with coloured silk braid. Higher ranking samurai often decorated their helmets, either with horns or with leather and paper in order to appear more fearsome.

Finally, in *Fig 6*, is one of ten new additions to *Citadel's CO2* range of *Wizards*. This figure was painted and based by Mark Flack.

Useful Addresses

Dixon Miniatures, Unit 28, Colne Valley Workshops, Spring Grove Mills, Linthwaite, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD7 5QG.

Citadel Miniatures, Chewton Street, Hilltop, Eastwood, Notts. □

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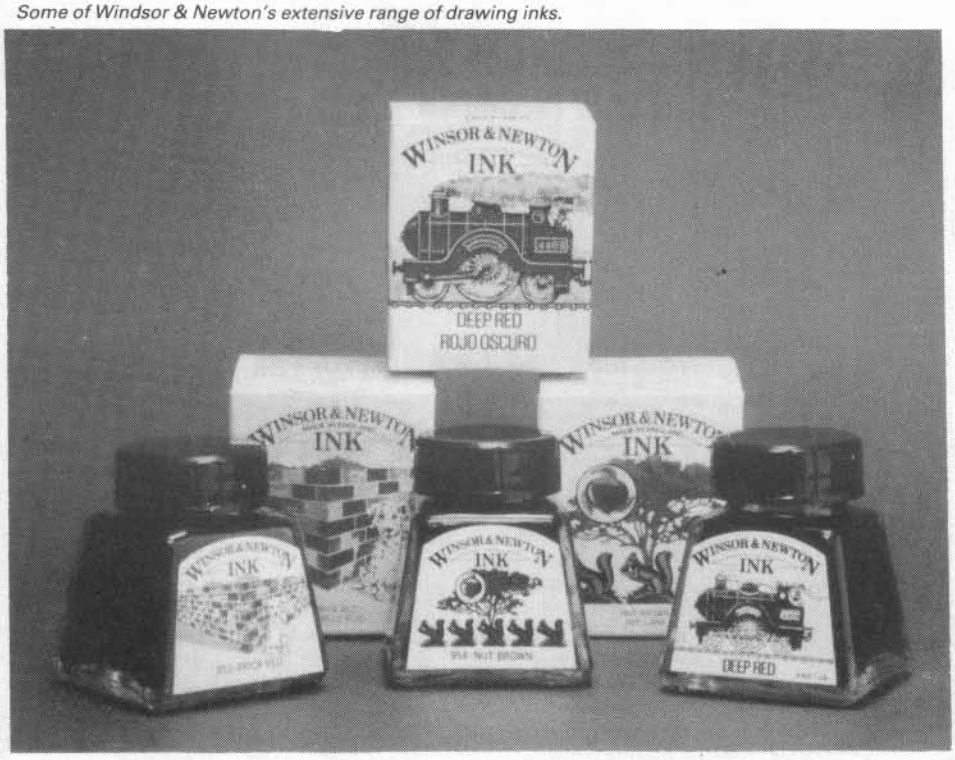

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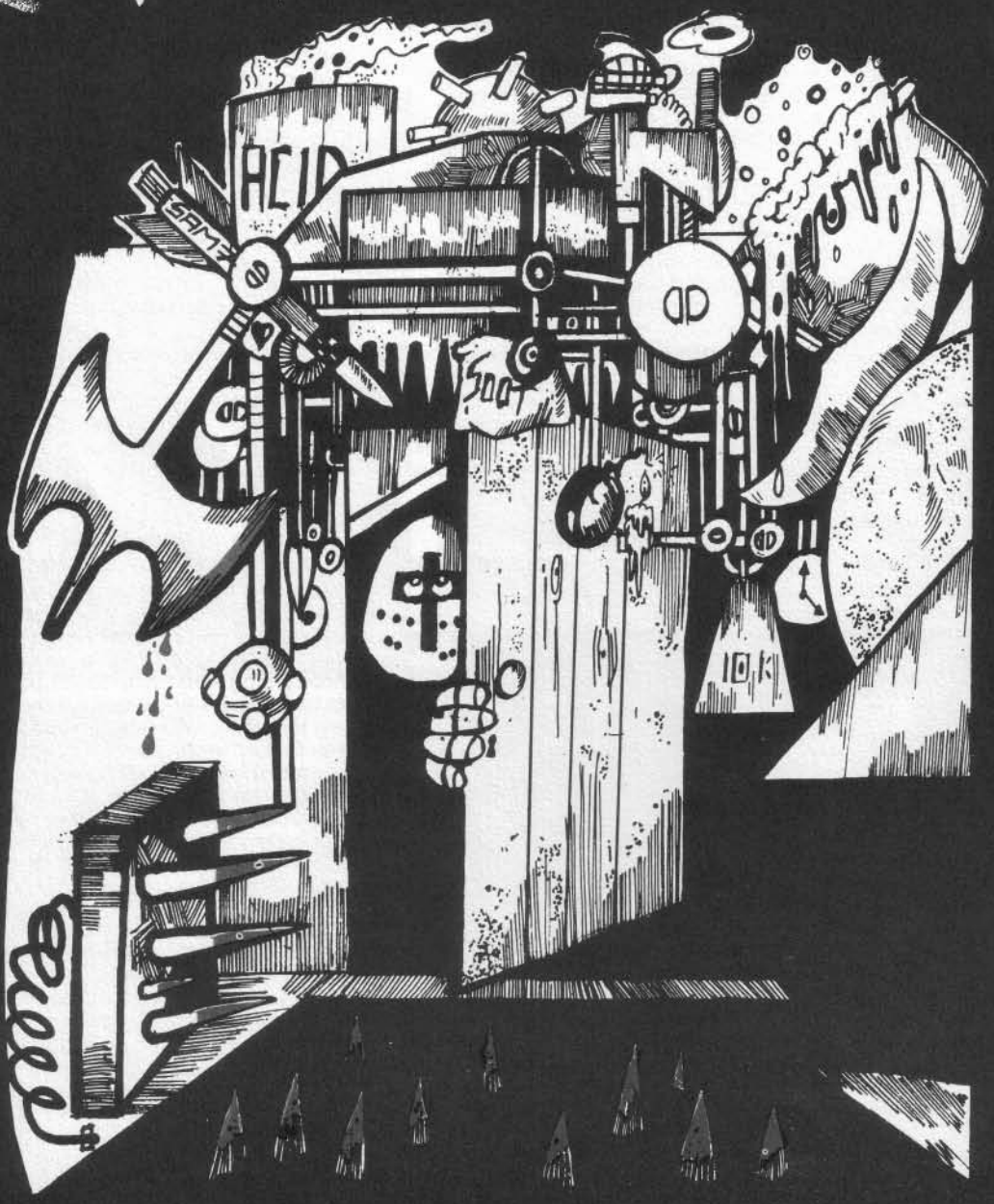

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DINNG!
I THAY! A GOBLIN! TALLYHO!
GAAAAAGAA
The knight charges....
THUMBAMBAMBADOMBA
But it's a moving target!
GRAB
HOP
I THAY!..GET ORF MY LANCE YOU WASCALL!
SHAKE SHAKE
DINNG!
OOOOFF!
WHAT THE ?...HOY!.. COME BACK WITH THAT!
..tsk-tsk how rude!
...YOU COWARDLY VARLET, YOU!...
THRRRP!
THPAY HERE HAWOLD.. HE'S TWAPPED IN THIS CWEVICE!
As soon as the knight is gone...
CHOMP!
GNASH!
RRRNP!
..while Wodney curses!
OO! WHERE IS THAT CURMUDGEN?!
SCRAPE
OOOF!
DONG!
CLANG!
Wodney returns to Harold...
HAWOLD!
BLAT!
COME HERE AND FIGHT FAIR YOU..
YAAAAH!
Around the corner...
TOOM!
...BUT GOBLINZ NEVER FIGHT FAIR!
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124 Female Sentinel Officer

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10c Orc with Axe 45p
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Entries should be from 4,000-10,000 words in length, typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, leaving adequate margins. Any accompanying illustrations or maps should be clearly marked, with appropriate references in the text. Scenarios can be written for any commercial role-playing system, for example, *AD&D, Call of Cthulhu, Golden Heroes* or *Traveller*. Please remember to include your name and address with your entry, and enclose an SAE should you want your scenario returned.

All entries should be sent to: *White Dwarf* (Scenario Competition), 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP, to arrive not later than 20th January 1986.

CLUBS RECOVER FROM HEAVY BEATING

Gamers in search of local games clubs will be pleased to learn that *White Dwarf* is now able to give increased coverage to clubs in its expanded *Small Ads* section. Officials who would like their club mentioned in *White Dwarf* should send the relevant information to us as soon as possible. For those unfamiliar with the clubs format, we require details of games played, the time and place, who to contact and any other comments (such as age restrictions, etc).

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TSR'S BIG CON

Games Fair '86, the residential role-playing games convention run by *TSR (UK)*, is to be held over the weekend of 11th-13th April 1986 at its usual venue of the University of Reading. Further details will be appearing soon, but the usual advice to book early still holds true! Unlike previous years, no special guest appearances are planned.

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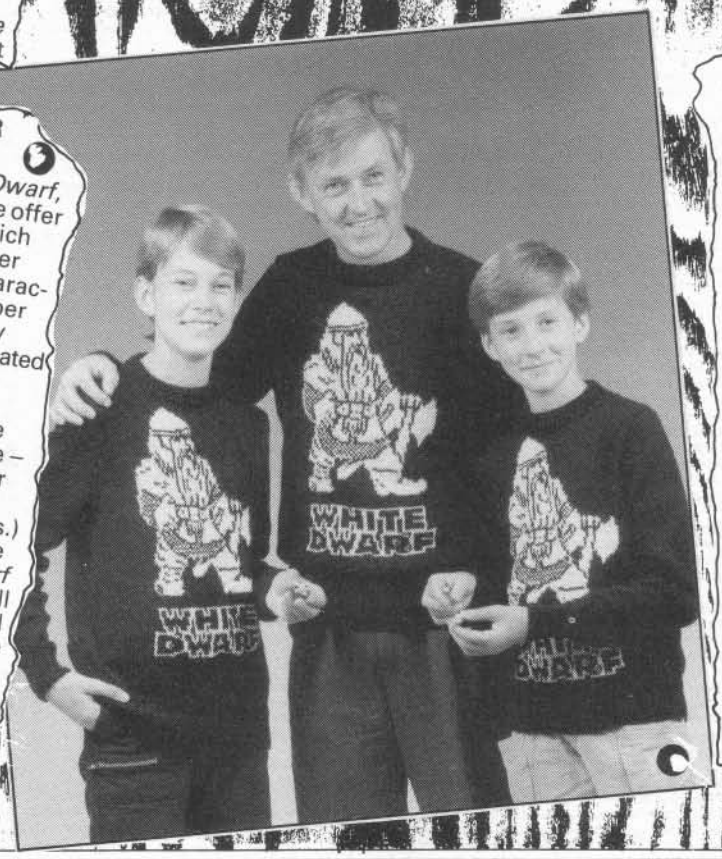

NEXT ISSUE

You'd better watch out! Santa Claus is coming to town in *Sleigh Wars*, a fun boardame with plenty of Christmas spirit. Marcus L Rowland contracts a strange *Fear of Flying* as a result of his *Cthulhu* adventure, and Pete Tamlyn roots out *The Origin of the PCs*, discussing the history of character generation systems. High-level *AD&D* characters are required for our adventure *The Necklace of Brisingamen*, but should look out for the pitfalls of *Life's Rich Pageant*, this issue's *Treasure Chest* special. To accompany the release of the *Talisman Expansion Set*, we also have a few more full-colour cards for the game and an introductory article, *The Jewel in the Crown*.

Regular features this issue include *Crawling Chaos, Heroes & Villains* and *Open Box*, plus three pages of cartoons.

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Books. Get your ideas for *D&D/Traveller/Call of Cthulhu* from the many second hand books available each month. Prices range from 50p to £1. Send for the latest Science Fiction & Fantasy list enclosing SAE to *Peter French Books*, 13 Beauford Park, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6QJ. ☎ (0823) 76439 after 6pm.

HELP!

Clubs, contacts and events can be advertised once at no charge up to a maximum of 25 words. Further insertions at the rate of 15p per word (incl VAT).

Swap World of Greyhawk (perfect condition) for *FF*. Matthew, ☎ 0497820512.

Swap. Want *Dragonquest* Hardback rules (vgc). Have *Indiana Jones* (as new) & *Bushido* & the 2 modules vgc. Mark Ryan, ☎ Lymington (Hants) 43422 after 6pm.

Help. Artists needed for *D&D* fanzine. Free copies for items printed. Send to: Art, Hazlemere, Halstead Hill, Goffs Oak, Hertfordshire EN7 5NA.

Wanted!!! WWII Micro-tanks! *Jacobite* 15mm Fantasy Figures! Possibly other 15mm Fantasy Figures! Also wanted: RPGers in Horncastle/Louth area. ☎ Stenigot 771.

Rocky Horror Show. Anything to do with above. Write to: Riff-Raff, 2 Bishop Lane, Upchurch, Nr Sittingbourne, Kent. Hi guys to all ZZ9 members.

Arrgh! Wanted *WD 1-33,38,44,45*, also *Imagine 2*. We need new players/DM to join existing group (any game). Danny, ☎ Sittingbourne (0795) 843391.

4 Experienced 17 year old players seek serious campaign for *RQ2, C&S, CoC* or *Traveller* in Streatham/Croydon. Will travel. Contact: Michael, ☎ (01) 737 1681, evenings.

Are there any fanzines for *Stormbringer, James Bond, Star Trek, Dragonroar, Aftermath* and *Superworld*? Contact Steve Longley, 65 Upper Batley Lane, Batley, West Yorkshire.

Fairly experienced Player/DM seeks group/ club to play *AD&D*. Will DM, but prefer playing (9th level) characters). Mark Crawford, 59 Balmuir Road, Dundee ☎ (0382) 827578.

Gizzard Brainslayer the Dwarf will be celebrating his reunion with Cid Putrid the Wizard and Gorger Krapp the epicure. PS Eggo Theskin will die.

Could you draw or write for *Balrog Bunter* fanzine? If so send to Paul Evans, 22 Five Fields Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton, W12 4PA. All work considered.

DM wanted for *AD&D/MERP* in Hay-on-Wye. Matthew, ☎ 0497 820512.

Gloucester, Cheltenham, Dean. Any games players out there (especially boardgamers)? Ages 18 or up. Neil or Jean, ☎ Gloucester (0452) 728356.

DM seeks extra players for *AD&D* campaign. Aged 14-18. Female or male. Ross, ☎ 061 (South Stockport) 439 8288.

Announcement. Mandrax the Marigold is at last slain! Zoom the zany accepts your offer of a drink, Legless.

DM wishes to start chain of *AD&D* traps and tricks. For more information, SAE to: Roy, 58 Woodhouse Lane, Amington, Tamworth, Staffs. B77 3AF.

Wanted *WD 1 to 51*. ☎ Leighton Buzzard 370727.

Arnold Grimwax needs you! I am an experienced gamer willing to play *AD&D, Traveller, RuneQuest* etc. Contact: Chris Illson, 61 Shipston Road, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire.

Wanted. *Trollpak*, also *White Dwarf Nos 46,47 & 59*. Contact Mike, ☎ Gresford 4169.

Zandor the ultimate in postal campaigns. Rule civilisations, control armies, ambush food wagons, beseige cities in your quest to become Dictator of Zandor. For further information send an SAE to A Chapman, Chellow-Dene, Chapel St, Welford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

Wanted. *MERP, D&D, AD&D, Warhammer, T&T* and *White Dwarf* back issues. Mark, ☎ Eire (021) 962981. Write: Mark White 37 Hillview Estate, Tramore Road, Cork, Eire.

Experienced Orc-slayer seeks others alike age 14-17 in Bo'ness, Falkirk, Edinburgh areas. Contact Torque, 18 Mingle Place, Bo'ness, Scotland. Will learn games if needed.

Wanted urgently *WD33*. Reasonable prices paid. Must be good condition. Stuart, ☎ Norwich (0603) 720297.

New Recruits wanted. Novices and experienced adventurers required for *AD&D* campaign. All races welcome. Contact: *Dragonslayer's Inc*, 485 Coal Road, Whinmoor, Leeds LS 14 1NW. David, ☎ (0532) 734324.

FRPer (18) seeks club/group in Ramsgate. Am willing to play most games, incl some SF. Write Ken c/o 35 Howson Road, Brockley, London SE4.

Male (15) seeks mature Male/Female gamers in the Bishop Auckland area. Plays *D&D, AD&D, MERP*. Contact Anthony Stockton, 16 Clarence Gardens, Bishop Auckland. ☎ 601468.

AD&Der, 19, seeks male pen-pal, into Tolkien, fantasy, dragons & writing long letters. Write to Su, Villa Jasmine, St Aubin's Road, St Helier, Jersey.

Blurred Vision: New fanzine needs articles, scenarios and artwork. Any contributions printed will get a free issue or 50p. Contact: Rick Byrne, Montrose, Bray Rd, Dublin 18, Eire. ☎ 896133.

Waffler's Anonymous. This new society is open to all waffle addicts, regardless of age or experience. The *WA* offers pen-friends and a bi-monthly newsletter full of YOUR waffle. Simply send one A4 size page of waffle, and an SAE to: *Waffle Anonymous*, 28 Merryhills Drive, Enfield, Middx. Zine editors: Take Note!!!

Space Chicken is the most lousy, low down, filthy swindler I have ever had the dubious honour of acquainting myself with. From Achilleoss.

I would like to learn and play *T&T* or *D&D* with a group in Stanford-le-Hope or Basildon. Dion, ☎ Stanford-le-Hope 642283.

Thanks to all people who wrote (I now have a pen-pal). If I didn't reply, sorry, I was flooded. Gavin.

Does anybody known how to play *James Bond RPG* and live. Around The Harlow, Up To Bishops Stortford/ down to Epping. Michael, ☎ (0279) 31109.

Fireshaw is dead! Long live the Black Fang Brotherhood.

Urgently required are articles, scenarios and artwork for *Warhammer* fanzine starting soon. FREE issue for published material. Contributions to James, 98 Spinney Halt, Whetstone, Leics.

I am Mithryn Sul, a female elven MU/Thief. I seek quill-friends, scribe parchments to me at 14 Painswick Ave, Patchway, Bristol BS12 6DA.

Hexur Hellchew lives again. Look out, peasants.

Return, Vaugon, to the fiery pit of Hell, where you came from. And you can take your ale too! From Frax.

If anyone has anything to dispose of a cocky 50 level magic-user please could I have it. James Blessing, 8 Berkly Ave, Manchester M19 2ED.

American male (14) seeks penpal. Male or female. Someone who plays *AD&D* or *Space Opera*. Tom Hildrich, 1502 Big Bend, Poplar Bluff, MO 63801, USA.

Fleet, Hampshire. Experienced DM, new to area, requires players for weekly *AD&D* campaign. Experience unimportant; mature, co-operative play essential. ☎ Fleet 25804 evenings.

AD&D PBM in the land of Ardenol. Send SAE to M Sharrock, "Cleve", Main Road, Nether Padley, Grindleford, Sheffield S30 1HP.

Wanted. *White Dwarf* back issues, will pay cover price. Swap *Warhammer 2* for *Dragonlance* calendar (if in good condition). ☎ (0245) 321378.

Artists Wanted! Could you draw for the *Booklet of Many Things? Send D&D* piccies for free issues! Mark Beresford, 633 Chatsworth Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 3NT.

Wanted. *Warhammer* New/Old edition (and, if possible *Forces of Fantasy* also). Mark Walsh, Elm Hall, Fortwilliam, Douglas, Cork, Eire.

Wanted. *MERP* supplements etc. Decent condition, decent price. Contact: Tony Leith, 3 Roberts Avenue, Selkirk. ☎ (0750) 20236.

NE Coast RPGer (18) seeks players (16+) for *CoC, Chill, AD&D*. Beginners welcome. Steven, ☎ Backworth 2681897.

Playtesters wanted for PBM game of galactic conquest. Write to Michael Scott, 10 Hough Green, Chester, CH4 8JG for details.

Stevenage. Anybody out there into a Middle-Earth RPG? 18 yr old seeks fellow players or established games. Contact Steve, ☎ Cottereel 229.

Northants. Players wanted to form new RPG group in Wellingborough/Rushden area. Various games played. Any sex, creed, experience. Ages 14-20 (roughly). Craig, ☎ Rushden 318186.

Wanted *Wyrms Footnotes 1,2,5,7,8* and magazines with *RuneQuest* content espl. *Different Worlds*. Will pay cash or exchange for other footnotes ie *3,4,6,9-14*. Contact: Chris, ☎ 0264 51543.

Games Master in Gravesend area wants to communicate with GM with *Borderlands* for scenario ideas. Have *Pavis, Rubble, Snakepipe Hollow* & *Griffin Mountain* scenario ideas in return. Dave, ☎ Fairseat 823396 after 6.30pm.

Mobster. More play testers required for 1920s gangster PBM game. Send large 17p SAE to Andrew, 38 Laurie Crescent, Bristol BS9 4TA.

Frisky Forehead wants to tell . . Sir Targanol, Death Manta, Sildar, Bran, Jack S***, and Peter also Llama. "But I can't".

Leicester. *C&S/AD&D* and other RPGs. Experienced GM/Player (Age 25) seeks players/groups aged 20+. Beginners welcome. Clarendon Park based. Chris, ☎ Leicester 709632 (evenings).

Artist seeks to work for a fanzine, preferably fantasy orientated. If interested, send details to: Steven Dickson, Noddsdale Cottage, Brisbane Glen Road, Largo, Ayrshire.

Wanted. *Griffin Mountain, Trollpak, Wyrms Footnotes 1-8* (have *11-14*, will exchange), *Cults of Terror, Nomad Gods, WD 50, RQ* material. Not wanted: *Rogues Gallery, Wilderlands High Fantasy*. Tim, ☎ (0344) 774409.

Wanted. *FASA* Deck Plans, FC1 Consumers Guide, *IISS* Ship Files, *Sorag, Merchants & Merchandise*, good prices paid. Contact: Andrew Miles, 2 Windsor Gardens, Castlecroft, Woverhampton.

Will anyone swap some *AD&D* modules for some starter *Traveller* stuff? ☎ (0533) 609747 Also *WD 50-52* wanted.

D&D Novice, 23 yrs Old, seeks similar living locally. Will try other games: Bob, 1 Bamburgh Terr, Byker, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE6 2HG.

Swap. *T&T* boxset & one scenario, for *MERP* stuff. Everything else maybe considered. Contact Marcus at 38 Bedford Rd, Reading, Berks, RG1 7HS. ☎ (0734) 597065.

Contributions wanted! Send material or Silly Stuff for the *Booklet of Many Things* to Stephen Gilbert, 15 Cross Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield S18 6SH. Free issues!

Wanted. Are there any ex *Treasure Trappers* out there who are still interested in real-life Fantasy Role-Playing? If so please contact, Keith, ☎ Leeds 685161.

Comic and FRP Material needed for new fanzine. Free issue and reduced subscriptions if articles printed. Send to: R Campbell, 7 Carrick Park, Ayr.

Norwich. 19 yr old looking for FRP campaign in area. *RQ2/3* preferred. Have transport problem. Jim, ☎ Norwich 897191 (after 7pm or at weekends).

Help. Articles needed for RPG fanzine. Send to *Wyrms Breath*, 3 Sun St, Baldock, Herts.

Himrath Morbane is a poser and a prat, whereas Raven's Ace, Raven's mean, Raven is a killing machine.

Is there role playing life in Penzance, aged around 14? Beginners and experts alike. Write to Darren Grenfell, 16 Penalverne Avenue, Penzance, Cornwall.

Biker, 25, Plays Sci-Fi, Fantasy RPGs and Skirmish, Ancients (15mm), *Starfleet Battles*. Glenn, ☎ 01 863 4284 write: 28 Roxborough Park, Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex.

Wanted. *Rubble, Pavis, Trollpak, Griffin Mountain, Cults of Terror*. Reasonable offers. Contact Richard Griffiths, Wrexham, ☎ (0978) 355058.

Wrexham Wargames Club needs players in the Wrexham area. FRP and wargamers catered for. Contact Richard Griffiths, Wrexham. ☎ (0978) 355058.

Helston/Cornwall. 17 year old male (amateur *AD&D* player) seeks experienced *AD&D* Dungeon Master & players, (preferably own age). Contact Dave, ☎ Helston 63362.

14 year old *AD&D* player seeks group/club in the Bath area willing to learn other RPGs. John Stapeley, ☎ 319316, 5pm-7.30pm.

Fantasy PBMG set on unexplored World. Become governor to gain control of a settlement. Send a 6×9 inch SAE to 15 Union St, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2PU.

Wanted. Original copy of *Warlord* boardgame. Map shown should contain sealanes not sea areas. Will pay well. Contact Rich, 519 Lanark Road, Edinburgh EH14 5DQ. ☎ (031) 453 4365.

Bushido, *James Bond* & *Star Trek*. 30 yr old enthusiast requires games partners one or two evenings each week. Please ☎ Woking 72164.

Swap. Mint bxed *RQ* (2nd ed) for *Traveller* Book (hardback, vgc). Also tatty *T&T* rbk for tatty *CW*. Andrew, ☎ Forest Row 3069 (after 4pm).

Wanted. People from the UK to converse with me about any gaming subject. Amn Brendan D Gabis, PSC#1 Box 1773. Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Washington USA 99011.

Wanted. *Citadel Traveller* 15mm figures, especially military. Adam, ☎ 061 980 7431.

Tolkien Fan and *MERP* player seeks players/group in Falkirk area. Also seeks penfriend. I Sharp, Bowtrees Farm, Airth, By Falkirk, FK2 8PJ.

Allies in Combat, King Snamir Shadowest and Jarak the Barbarian (Darron Wislon and Stuart Robertson) declare war against those stumpy legged, greasy bearded little dwarves.

Glad Tidings! This is to announce the marriage of Anscar to Helva Forestfriend in Ravenport on Sattarg Aogot 24th, with the paladin Tikaroa in attendance. Let no minion of evil try to part them!

Young American (14) seeks correspondence with young Englishman (13-15). Wishes to discuss RPG subjects. Please write to: Areg, 423 Woodland Avenue, Avon, New Jersey 07717 USA.

RPG Penzance. 2 experienced players seek gamers/clubs in Penwith Area. *AD&D* preferred. Experience in many others. 16+ please. Contact: Mike or Steve, ☎ (0736) 61704.

Wanted. *Judges Guild City State* or campaign wilderness maps. Second hand or new. Jeremy, ☎ 051 428 1378.

Help! 13yr old RPGer seeks other adventurers in the Walton-Weybridge area. Contact Mark, ☎ 222759.

(A)D&D. Two *D&Ders* would like to join campaign in Cheshunt area. Failing this will someone teach us *AD&D*. Martin, ☎ (0992) 33036.

Swindon gamers in desperate need of new participants for *AD&D, Traveller, SGS, Champions* and Dirty Jokes. Interested? ☎ (0793) 32597 and ask for Theodore Bear. PS Ailurophobes need not apply.

Wanted Desperately!!! *WDs. Numbers 23,26,40 & 44*. All offers considered. Also any *RuneQuest* material please. Mark, ☎ (0742) 587505

Go home Black Baron, your dinner is getting cold – you shall never have Karameikos or Specularum. Grom the Kobold.

19 Year Old Roleplayer seeks players of *Car Wars* game in Govan Hill area. Interested? Games, ☎ 423 7140.

Wanted. *Warhammer 2* also 25mm figures. Pay any reasonable price or swop for *AD&D, D&D, Traveller*. Eric Hawkblade, Manor Cottage, Little Bardfield, Essex.

Orc Haters in the Potteries. If you play *AD&D, MERP, Traveller* or *CW*. Peter, ☎ 720254 to discuss starting a club.

Swap Traveller items: Basic System (Boxed), , Book, Books 1 and 2, D Adv 4, Adv 4 (Current cost £36) for *Rolemaster* Boxed. D Paylor, 46 Stirling Avenue, Leamington Spa, Warwicks, CV32 7HR.

AD&D Herts. Experienced player wishes to meet others in the St Albans area. J Taylor, 6 Cunninghamhill Road, St Albans.

Creedar and tribe! My messengers have told me of your antics in Edkla. Be warned, challenging me is futile! Timox, the mage of Age. .

Beware of Mr Moon. He is as truculent as he is corpulent.

Swap. *Talisman* (prime condition) for *Car Wars, Battlecars, D&D* Basic set or *MERP* (Boxed). Prime condition please. ☎ (0385) 889147.

Cleveland. *Adventurers Guild* meets Fridays from 6.30 at the Literary Institute, Lord Street, Redcar, for *AD&D, CoC, RuneQuest, Golden Heroes, Traveller*, many more. All welcome!

Attention. All keen *D&D* players in the North London area wishing to play *D&D* in a club please send a stamped addressed envelope to Stephen Dinnes, 145 Hampden Way, Southgage, N14 5AY. No experience needed (please state age).

West Drayton & Heathrow area. Level 8 Paladin seeks adventurers & Fatemasters for *Warhammer, AD&D, MERP* and *CoC*. Paul, ☎ 01 759 3839.

Wanted. *Cults of Prax, CoT, Borderlands, Big Rubble, Pavis*. James, ☎ 0204 68189.

Anyone there? Very experienced *AD&D* player (22) seeks other clubs/players in Elgin/ Moray area. Write to Ian Doyle, 226 OCU, RAF Lossiemouth, Moray IV31 6SD.

Dostal of Yangosta you smell like an Uruks bot, have a bath. Yours sufferingly Sven.

Take heed Sven, Ravol, Ironburn, Windstep and Dostal. My cold Shadow shall burn thy souls & crumble Valista, The Black Warlord, (DM).

Attractive female American 16 year old penfriend wanted. Into *AD&D, Warhammer*, painting miniatures, 'heavy' rock. Contact (with picture) Matt Garrett, Trewern, Cusop, Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire, England.

Anyone? Player (DM?) seeks anyone in Hastings area. Any age, sex, race or social standing, willing to play *SF, Traveller, AD&D, CoC, MERP, D&D, T&T*. Karl, ☎ 438130.

Swap *V&V* rulebook and two modules for *Marvel Superheroes* or *Champions*. Jamie, ☎ (05402) 596 (after 4.30pm).

Mourn Ula Yelmalio Lady and Brazen Aldryami Lady, but watch your backs, Firedrake, Edgar, Raganan, you double-dealing yellow-bellied, Troll-loving scum.

Announcement. Draloth is lying. He does use his codpiece as a face mask.

S'right. 15 yr old philosopher wishes to exchange meaty riffs with other beautiful people about *D&D, 2000AD, CoC*. Send vibes to G Hobson, 100 Bryn Awelon, Buckley, CH7 2QF.

Swap. Anyone want to unload *G Heroes* or *Paranoia*? Offering *J D* game, *Battlecars, Battlebikes, T&T*. Contact G Hobson, 100 Bryn Awelon, Buckley, CH7 2QF.

Help. Calling *AD&D* players in Cambridge (Age 17+). Players wanted for regular midweek sessions and occasional weekends. Contact Kevin, ☎ Cambridge (0223) 323581.

Greyhawk players seek experienced *AD&D* group in Greenwich/Bromley area for prolonged campaign. Any level play suitable, Ages 16+ Contact James, ☎ 851 6176.

Autoduellists! Join *CW* campaign free in return for rules & equipment from early *AQs*.. Contact: Jon Freeman, 3 Coppice Court, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 5SA.

Croydon. Couple seek players (18+) for *AD&D* and *Star Trek*, beginners welcome, would particularly welcome extra female input to game. ☎ 684 1616. PS Doesn't anyone play *Starfleet Battles*?

Crewe. New games club planned, all roleplayers in this area please contact me for details. *AD&D, CoC, Rolemaster, Bushido, Chivalry & Sorcery. Star Trek, Space Opera* and more . . . also wargames & boardgames.. Megan Robertson, 12 Bude Close, Crewe CW1 3XG. ☎ 257758.

Kir-tana-lorn. Prepare to have your effeminate hat stuffed with yer slimy innards. Ograth Mgillet.

Exeter. 15 yr old in Exeter seeks others to form or join a group to play *MERP* game. Phone me up and ask for Legolas! ☎ 58159.

Challenge. Talios, Paladin challenges the evil! minions of Aleax Bor-Klay to a duel to the death on the fields of Zor at the keyed equinox.

Help! My group is breaking up. Need new players/DMs in York for *AD&D*. Also *Traveller* & *Middle Earth*. Kay, ☎ (0904) 768996.

Treasure and Blood for all! DM/Player recently moved to Christchurch area, needs novice/experienced *AD&D* players aged 15+.. Paul, ☎ Bransgore 73062.

Wanted. Any *D&D* players in the West Midlands area. Ages 13-15 preferred. Please contact Paul Mountjoy, ☎ (021) 501 2243.

Swap *RuneQuest 2* for *Traveller*. Also *Middle Earth* for supplements or will sell. Andrew, ☎ Forest Row 3069 (after 4).

An experienced *AD&D* player/DM recently moved from Liverpool to Kew Surrey, would like to hear from any person or club in the area who plays *AD&D* or other games. Neil Furnice, ☎ 948 6374.

Are there any Fantasy Gaming clubs in the Chelmsford area for 12+? I am also looking for *D&D* playing penpals. Contact Ruth, 10 Pan Walk, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2HD.

Federation of Fans is a Star Trek correspondence by mail group. Members needed, will answer questions on Trek. Info, SAE. Garry Jones, 13 Southville Road, Sandfields Estate, Port Talbot, S Wales.

Wanted. *DQ* 2nd Edition rulebooks, reason. cond, good prices pd, Contact John, ☎ (02216) 2572 (after 6pm).

East Leeds RPG club seeks serious players/ referees of *D&D, Cthulhu* etc. Wednesday evening meetings. Nominal subscriptions. Contact Mark Shepherdson, 2 Primrose Gardens, Halton LS15 7QR.

Sheffield University (Not Only) *D&D* Society. Meet us at Intro Bazaar, Octagon Centre, 4th October (morning), or the Hornblower pub, 6th October, 7pm.

Evesham, Worcs. Evesham Role-playing Association. Meets fortnightly at the Talbot Hotel Club Room, Port Street. *AD&D, Warhammer* etc. Paul, ☎ (0386) 48202 for details.

Hyborian postal campaign. Politics, Armies, Intrigue. Send SAE to Nick Rolfe, 28 Ashford Rd, Bearsted, Kent ME14 4LP.

AD&D PBM campaign starting soon, players required now. Write to: Neil Cheyne, 10 Henderland Road, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 1JQ.

Malvern area. 2 male warriors require 2 female characters to play *MERP, D&D*. Ages 13-15. Other game learnt. Contact: Andy, ☎ Malvern 4711.

Ha! Demented 13 yr old RPGer seeks club or other gamers in Leamington Spa. Martin, ☎ 30390 after 6pm (absolutely no whales).

Anyone wanting to write to roleplayers (15) playing/refereeing *D&D, AD&D, Traveller, Car Wars* and many wargames. Contact: Martin Omander, Caritasgatan 16, S21618 Malmoe, Sweden.

In memoriam, Alcuin. He forms his own gravestone.

Haldorf, my vow is sworn and I, Muthcrax Trollhide will fight by your side until I am slain by a blade of evil.

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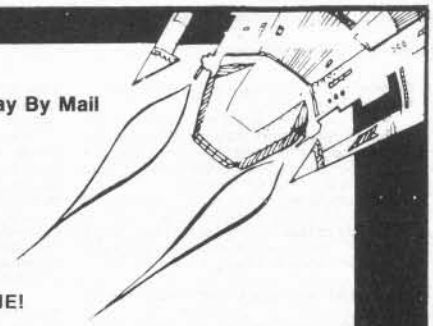

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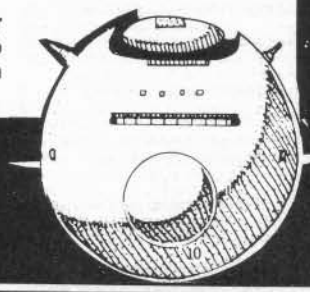

To enrol in CAPITOL send a £6.00 cheque/PO/International money order payable to KJC Games. For this you will receive the Rulebook, setup and first two turns. Each turn of Capitol costs £1.75 for the first 60 orders. Each additional 30 orders costs 75p. European players are welcome. Reply to:- KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 2UL.

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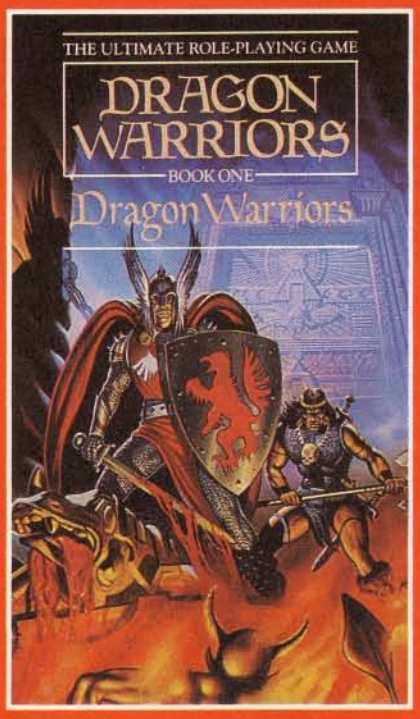

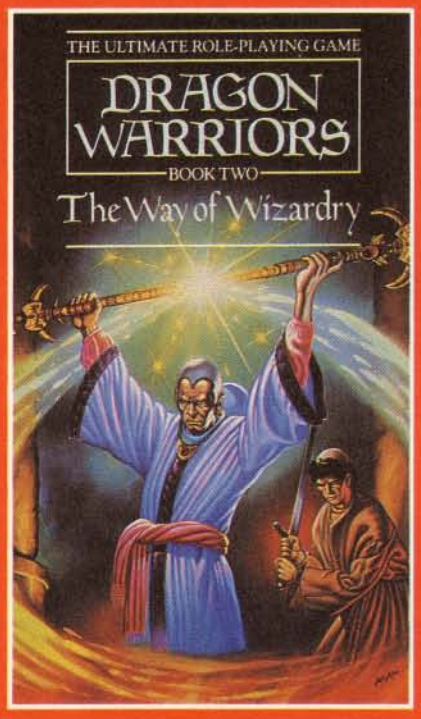

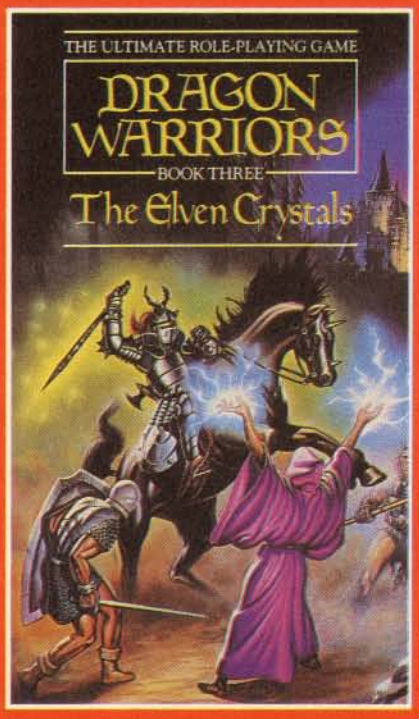

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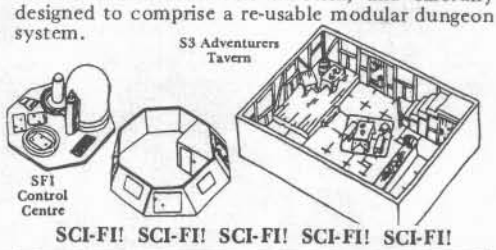

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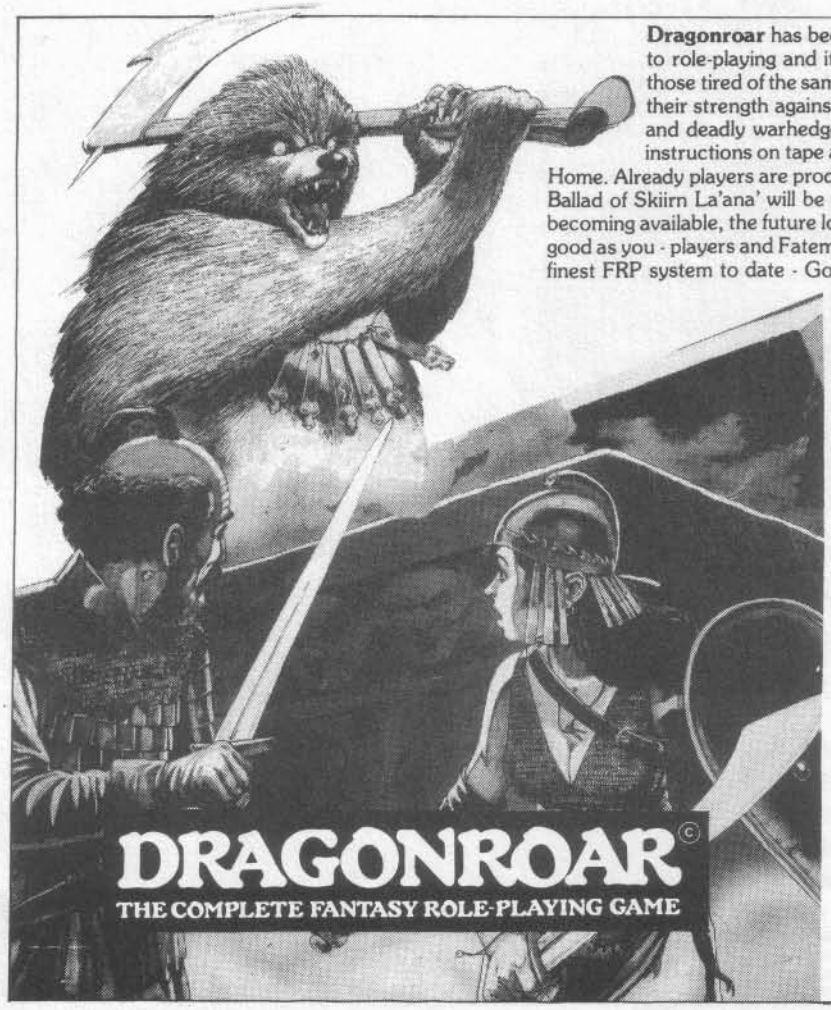

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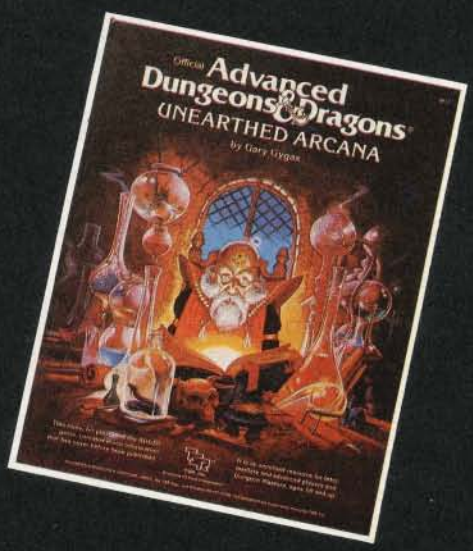

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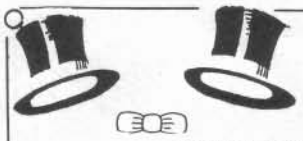

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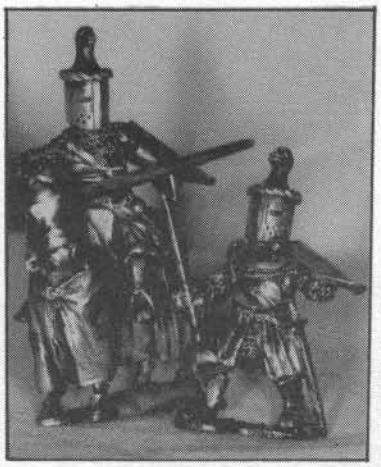

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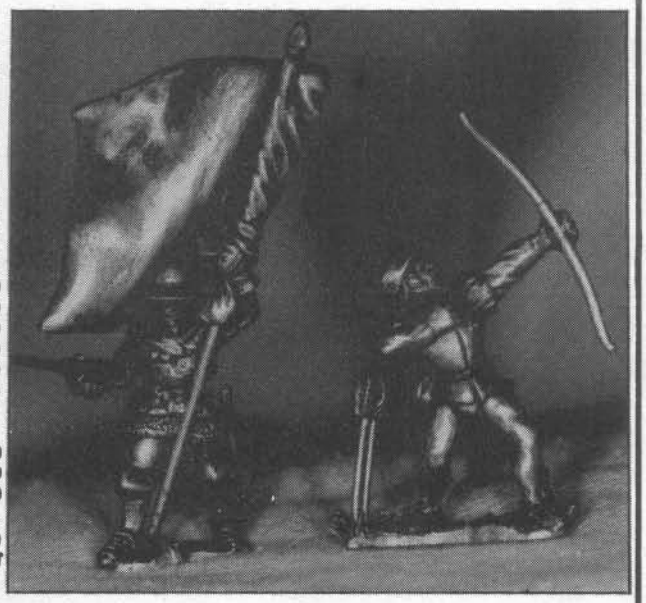

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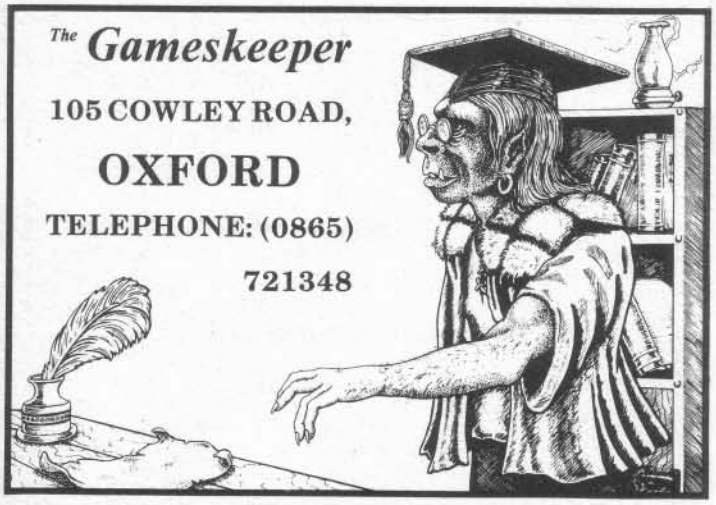

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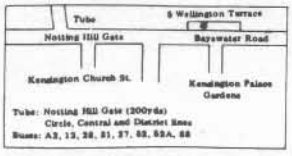

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